

## 5 Year Plan Update

Beekeepers, please accept a big thank you from the AFB PMP Management Board for joining us in the process of developing a 5-year plan/strategy for the eradication of American foulbrood in New Zealand.

Submissions on the first draft of the 5-year plan/strategy have been generally very favourable. Some beekeepers have raised matters and ideas which have not been identified to date, while others provided significant amounts of technical detail.

We have compiled the submissions and are identifying how we can best work through them with our strategic partners, MPI andASUREQuality, as the next step.

Your submissions on the first draft of the 5-year plan/strategy have raised a lot of good points. We are committed to eradication of AFB and have found that most beekeepers support this goal.

While some submitters expressed doubt about the value of a 5-year plan/strategy, the AFB PMP Management Board has affirmed the need for change to create a more successful program for dealing with AFB. This will include looking at all aspects of AFB Management and bringing the conclusions together in a way that enables beekeepers to engage in shaping the future.

Part of this process will be the development of a strategic document setting out the plan for the future. We will certainly be consulting further before this is finalised.

A total of 420 responses were received to our invitation for comment. Most responses came in via our online survey link (SurveyMonkey). Fifteen substantive written submissions were received, three of which came from the same person. Ninety-five per cent of respondents support the general approach of the 5-year plan/strategy and its goal of eradicating AFB by 2030.

As expected, there was a wide diversity of views about what needs to be done and whether this requires new resources; this direction will be determined as the strategy unfolds.

The majority of beekeepers agree that change is necessary and the AFB PMP must be managed in a manner that reflects the present-day beekeeping environment. In addition, beekeepers consider that non-compliant operators should be brought into line with stronger legal requirements and industry best practice. Beekeepers also agree that technology could be better utilised and communications improved.

The AFB PMP Management Board is now developing responses to the points raised and deciding how the next draft of the plan should be shaped. The Board is also developing details about the practical implementation of how AFB can be eradicated and what investment may be required to achieve this ultimate goal. We will be issuing updates as the work progresses.

Again, thank you for this continued interest and support. We will be seeking further consultation with you in the coming months.



## AFB Recognition Courses scheduled for 2017

Please refer to our website if you wish to attend an AFB Recognition Course or AFB Refresher. If you are a DECA holder, you must attend a refresher every two years. All queries relating to these courses to be sent to Janette at [training@afb.org.nz](mailto:training@afb.org.nz)

## Texting of AFB Incidence

Recently a notification system has been implemented which advises beekeepers of AFB that has been reported in their area. The notifications are being sent via SMS to beekeepers with a cell phone number listed on the apiary database, and also as an email to beekeepers with a listed email address.

The notification system works exactly the same way as the 'flag' system in APIWEB meaning that you will receive notification any time an AFB find is reported within 3km of one or more of your apiaries.

It is important to note that this is not the same as a rob out notice which is still sent as an email attachment. The difference is that a rob out report is notifying the potential source of disease, whereas AFB notifications simply advise of detections. The apiary where the AFB was reported is generally not the source of the disease (if it is, you will also receive a rob out notice).

Like the flag in APIWEB, this advises that there is potentially AFB in the area allowing you to alter the frequency and thoroughness of your inspection as you see fit.

Please be aware that the location of apiaries where AFB has been reported will not be disclosed as apiary location is privileged. However, it is hoped that these notifications will assist you in making more informed AFB disease management decisions.

## PCR Sample Testing

Molecular diagnosis of *Paenibacillus larvae* the infectious agent of American Foulbrood

American Foulbrood (AFB) is a serious and costly honey bee disease caused by the bacteria *Paenibacillus larvae*. The New Zealand American Foulbrood National Pest Management Plan (NPMP) diagnoses AFB by visual hive inspection or laboratory culture of suspect larvae, and positive hives must be destroyed by burning. This strategy has served the industry well, lowering annual incidence from ~1.2% in 1990 to 0.2% in 2015. But incidence has remained static at ~0.2% for the past decade and the ultimate goal of eradicating AFB remains elusive.

At Plant and Food Research we have support from Horticulture Innovation Australia to develop a quantitative PCR (qPCR) test for *P. larvae*. Quantitative PCR is a technology that is widely used to diagnose many infectious diseases in humans and animals, and will potentially be faster, cheaper and more sensitive than existing methods for detecting AFB. It is expected that qPCR will complement existing surveillance programs to improve AFB control.



## **Destruction of AFB Infected Plastic Hives, Boxes, Lids and Other Infected Material**

As a further reminder to beekeepers and to avoid confusion, the AFB PMP Management Board's policy is that "scraping" off wax and treating with Sodium Hypochlorite is not an approved method of destruction when dealing with infected plastic beekeeping gear as highlighted above.

The Board has been advised by Dr Mark Goodwin of Plant and Food Research that "scraping" is too difficult to quantify as opposed to "dipping" at 160 degrees for 10 minutes or irradiation. A key point made by Dr Goodwin is that Sodium Hypochlorite can only kill what it reaches.

AFB infected plastic hives, boxes, lids, frames and any other plastic material must be burnt. This must be done in a responsible manner, noting the challenges this presents. Safe re-cycling options are under investigation with some excellent progress being made. We will advise details and process in due course.

## **Important Message regarding Levy Invoices**

As levy invoices are due to be generated as at **31 March**, please refer to the notice below regarding beekeeper responsibility to have all relevant information up to date thereby ensuring your levy accurately reflects your current holdings. Updating your database records is best done via the Apiweb System on our website. If you are no longer keeping bees and wish to cancel your registration, you must contact us.

