



Frequently Asked Questions: Proposal to replace the American Foulbrood Apiary and Beekeeper Levy with a Hive and Beekeeper Levy

With consultation on the proposal to replace the American Foulbrood Apiary and Beekeeper Levy with Hive and Beekeeper Levy underway we have been getting some good questions and feedback on the proposal.

What is the Management Agency's goal?

To eliminate American foulbrood (AFB) as specified by the National American Foulbrood Pest Management Plan.

Did the National Beekeepers Association implement the National American Foulbrood Pest Management Plan as proposed in 1997?

No, the National Beekeepers Association did not implement the National American Foulbrood Pest Management Plan as was proposed to beekeepers in 1997:

1. *1997 AFB PMP proposal - The AFB PMP will enable the problem of beekeepers who fail to carry out their required disease control responsibilities under the Apiaries Act to be addressed*

Reality – The National Beekeepers Association failed to address the issue of serious and ongoing non-compliance by a minority of beekeepers. These beekeepers were allowed to continue to propagate AFB and act as a source of infection for neighbouring apiaries for 20 years until the Management Agency announced that it had the capability to hold non-compliant beekeepers to account in December 2018.

The Management Agency has taken multiple compliance actions since November 2018 to address serious cases of non-compliance. In each instance between 20% and 60% of the beekeeper's hives were found to be infected with AFB.

2. *1997 AFB PMP proposal - There will be user-pays charges under the AFB PMP. Beekeepers who fail to submit a Certificate of Inspection, file an Annual Disease Return, destroy contaminated materials or who have apiaries under movement control will be charged.*

Reality – The National Beekeepers Association did not implement:

- default inspections for beekeepers that failed to submit a Certificate of Inspection or recover costs
- default inspections for beekeepers that failed to complete an Annual Disease Return or recover costs, or
- place high risk apiaries under movement control.

Since November 2017 the Management Agency has:

- initiated cost recovered default inspections of apiaries owned by beekeepers whom failed to submit a Certificate of Inspection,
- place high risk apiaries under movement control, and



- is proposing to initiate default cost recovered inspections for beekeepers that fail to submit an Annual Disease Return.
3. *1997 AFB PMP proposal - Honey spore testing will be used as a routine screening tool in audits of DECA holders who declare disease incidence significantly below the national average.*

Reality – The National Beekeepers Association did not implement honey spore testing of DECA holder’s honey whom declared disease incidence significantly below the national average. Consequently, seriously non-compliant beekeepers have been able to stay ‘under the radar’ simply by not reporting their cases of AFB.

The Management Agency is seeking additional funding under the levy proposal to address this issue.

Why is the Management Agency proposing that the apiary and beekeeper levy be replaced with a hive and beekeeper levy?

The Management Agency is proposing to replace the apiary and beekeeper levy because a majority of submissions on the July 2018 levy proposal told us that beekeepers wanted the apiary levy replaced with a hive levy. Submitters were concerned that the existing apiary and beekeeper levy structure is:

- Unfair to beekeepers with low number of hives per apiary, and
- Promoted the formation of large apiaries that would increase disease risks.

The Management Agency has listened to beekeepers concerns which is why we are proposing that the apiary and beekeeper levy is replaced with a hive and beekeeper levy.

Which beekeepers should be concerned about the Management Agency’s proposed approach to compliance and enforcement of the National American Foulbrood Pest Management Plan?

Beekeepers that are routinely inspecting their beehives for AFB and notifying and destroying cases of AFB have no reason to be concerned.

However, beekeepers that are consistently failing to adequately inspect their hives for AFB and/or destroy infected hives are on notice. Unless they change their ways and take responsibility for eliminating AFB from their beehives the Management Agency will act to prevent their beehives from posing a serious risk to the hives owned by other beekeepers.

You can obtain a [full copy of the proposal here](#).

Consultation closes at 5pm Friday 22 March 2019. You can make a submission by completing the [online submission form](#).