



# **American Foulbrood Pest Management Plan Report to the Annual General Meeting of Apiculture New Zealand (Inc)**

**Rotorua Energy Events Centre  
Government Gardens  
Queens Drive**

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(Friday)**

**Report prepared by:  
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# **American Foulbrood Pest Management Plan AFB PMP**

## **Summary**

2018/19 has been a year of important changes for the Management Agency. The Management Agency has heard beekeepers' pleas for improved AFB control and this year we have made a number of changes that we believe will make a difference.

The Management Agency has hired Marco Gonzalez to be the National Operations Manager, transferred the management of AP2s fromASUREQuality to the Management Agency and increased the number of AP2s nationwide from 21 to 37. These changes have enabled the Management Agency to be much more responsive to beekeeper notifications of disease and non-compliant behaviour.

The Management Agency has also changed the focus of its apiary inspections from 'seeking to find hives with AFB' to 'seeking to identify beekeepers whom are not implementing the AFB elimination practices specified in their Disease Elimination Conformity Agreement'. The Management Agency is now assessing whether AP2 inspection findings are consistent with good AFB elimination practice, and what, if any compliance and enforcement actions are appropriate. In most cases the AP2 inspection findings do not give the Management Agency cause to be concerned. However, the Management Agency is also identifying serious cases of noncompliance (AP2 inspection finds AFB in more than 10% of hives) and in these instances the Management Agency is cancelling Disease Elimination Conformity Agreements, serving directions and acting on default.

Beekeepers that are seriously non-compliant with their Disease Elimination Conformity Agreement (DECA) and plan rules have very high levels of AFB and pose a serious threat to the health of neighbouring beekeeper's hives. Historically these beekeepers have been able to hide their non-compliance from the Management Agency simply by failing to report cases of AFB. The changes that the Management Agency has made has increased the likelihood of detecting these seriously non-compliant beekeepers, however the Management Agency simply does not have the resources to detect all of the seriously non-compliant beekeepers hiding amongst the crowd of 9,300 New Zealand beekeepers. This is why the Management Agency has consulted with beekeepers on proposals to increase the levy and has requested the Minister to make a new American Foulbrood – Hive and Beekeeper Levy Order.

The Management Agency acknowledges that there are many more improvements that need to be made before the National American Foulbrood Pest Management Plan is delivering on the promise made in 1997 to eliminate AFB from managed colonies in New Zealand, and as a Management Agency we are committed to working with beekeepers to turn this promise into reality.

## **Reported Incidence of American Foulbrood, June 2018 to May 2019**

2,904 cases (0.32% of hives) of AFB were notified in the 12 months to 31 May 2019. 2,806 cases (0.32% of hives) of AFB were notified in the 12 months to 31 May 2018.

These statistics suggest that the level of AFB has remained relatively constant over the past two years. However, it is important to note that 523 cases of AFB in 2018/19 were found in three beekeepers hives by the Management Agency acting on default of their Disease Elimination Conformity Agreement. Had the Management Agency not changed its approach to compliance and enforcement only 2,381 cases (0.26% of hives) would have been notified in the 12 months to 31 May 2019. This would have represented an 18% decline in the level of AFB.

## Beekeeper, Apiary and Hive Numbers

The beekeeping industry continues to grow despite the downturn in honey prices. As at 1 June 2019 there were 9,378 registered beekeepers, 59,019 apiaries and 921,522 hives. The regional breakdown including reported incidence of AFB is shown in the following table.

| RegionName        | Total<br>Current<br>Apiaries | Total<br>Current<br>Hives | Total<br>Diseased<br>Apiaries | Total<br>Diseased<br>Hives | Overall<br>Apiary<br>Prevalence | Overall<br>Hive<br>Prevalence |
|-------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Northland         | 7058                         | 112117                    | 132                           | 216                        | 1.87%                           | 0.19%                         |
| Auckland          | 3905                         | 41231                     | 130                           | 143                        | 3.33%                           | 0.35%                         |
| Waikato           | 7727                         | 145411                    | 139                           | 261                        | 1.80%                           | 0.18%                         |
| Bay of Plenty     | 3616                         | 68656                     | 71                            | 118                        | 1.96%                           | 0.17%                         |
| Gisborne          | 1902                         | 38367                     | 21                            | 56                         | 1.10%                           | 0.15%                         |
| Hawke's Bay       | 3650                         | 62124                     | 69                            | 105                        | 1.89%                           | 0.17%                         |
| Taranaki          | 2934                         | 37886                     | 43                            | 70                         | 1.47%                           | 0.18%                         |
| Manawatu-Wanganui | 7076                         | 122610                    | 97                            | 178                        | 1.37%                           | 0.15%                         |
| Wellington        | 4446                         | 66983                     | 202                           | 555                        | 4.54%                           | 0.83%                         |
| West Coast        | 1060                         | 11431                     | 40                            | 106                        | 3.77%                           | 0.93%                         |
| Canterbury        | 7391                         | 103855                    | 341                           | 688                        | 4.61%                           | 0.66%                         |
| Otago             | 3132                         | 39137                     | 39                            | 54                         | 1.25%                           | 0.14%                         |
| Southland         | 1069                         | 14481                     | 41                            | 87                         | 3.84%                           | 0.60%                         |
| Tasman            | 1826                         | 22783                     | 65                            | 78                         | 3.56%                           | 0.34%                         |
| Nelson            | 441                          | 2837                      | 15                            | 21                         | 3.40%                           | 0.74%                         |
| Marlborough       | 1782                         | 31561                     | 77                            | 189                        | 4.32%                           | 0.60%                         |
| Outside Regions   | 4                            | 52                        | 3                             | 11                         | 75.00%                          | 21.15%                        |
| <b>Totals</b>     | <b>59019</b>                 | <b>921522</b>             | <b>1525</b>                   | <b>2936</b>                | <b>2.58%</b>                    | <b>0.32%</b>                  |

## Annual Disease Return (ADR) and Certificate of Inspection (COI) Defaulters

9,638 beekeepers were sent an ADR in April through early May 2019. As at the 1st June 2019, 6451 (67%) returns had been received. The beekeepers whom have not submitted their ADR's on time will be sent reminders before being sent a warning that continued failure to submit an ADR is a breach of their Disease Elimination Conformity Agreement and their Disease Elimination Conformity Agreement will be cancelled if the ADR is not submitted before the deadline.

Certificates of Inspection were sent to 4,334 beekeepers in August 2018. On the 8th January 2019, 3,131 (72%) had completed their COI.

The Management Agency is performing default inspections for the 558 beekeepers were in default of both their 2018 ADR and COI. These inspections will be cost recovered.

## Disease Elimination Conformity Agreements (DECA)

49% of beekeepers currently hold a Disease Elimination Conformity Agreement. These beekeepers own 93% of hives.

## **AFB Recognition Course Training**

Training beekeepers to recognise AFB is an important focus for the Management Agency. The Management Agency ensures that AFB recognitions and refresher courses are available to all beekeepers throughout the country each year. Currently over 1,300 beekeepers per year take up the opportunity to attend one of over 100 courses run.

| <b>Calendar Year</b> | <b>Courses</b> | <b>Test via Proctor</b> | <b>Participants</b> |
|----------------------|----------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 2006                 | 15             | 4                       | 93                  |
| 2008                 | 88             | 36                      | 264                 |
| 2010                 | 59             | 29                      | 491                 |
| 2012                 | 39             | 7                       | 490                 |
| 2014                 | 59             | 13                      | 751                 |
| 2016                 | 65             | 24                      | 1,127               |
| 2018                 | 108            | 111                     | 1,327               |

## **AFB Authorised Person Inspection Activity**

The Management Agency has hired Marco Gonzalez to be the National Operations Manager, transferred the management of AP2s fromASUREQuality to the Management Agency and increased the number of AP2s nationwide from 21 to 37. These changes have enabled the Management Agency to be much more responsive to beekeeper notifications of disease and non-compliant behaviour.

The number of apiaries inspected by AP2s was 1,401 up from 861 in 2017/18.

## **Retail Pack Honey Sampling Testing Programme**

79 retail and RMP honey samples were tested for AFB by dNature Diagnostics and Research Ltd. Eleven samples (14%) returned positive results. Beekeepers have been informed of the results and beekeeper with positive results were requested to provide traceability information and advised to conduct an additional AFB inspection.

## **Acknowledgement**

I'd like to thank: Marco Gonzalez and Janette Gwilliam for their work managing apiary inspections and the AFB Recognition Training programme; Byron Taylor and the team at ASUREQuality for their work maintaining the Apiary Database and processing applications for Disease Elimination Conformity Agreements; and our AFB Recognition Course Trainer and Apiary Inspectors whom are on the front line assisting beekeepers to eliminate AFB. Your efforts and dedication to AFB elimination do make a difference, and I look forward to working with you over the coming year.

Clifton King

National Compliance Manager

The Management Agency, National American Foulbrood Pest Management Plan