



 THE MANAGEMENT AGENCY
NATIONAL AMERICAN FOULBROOD
PEST MANAGEMENT PLAN



ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19





FOREWORD

from Board Chairman John Hartnell & National Compliance Manager Clifton King 3

OBJECTIVES

of the National American Foulbrood Pest Management Plan 4

REPORTED INCIDENCE

of American Foulbrood 5

2018-2019 AFB Heat Map 6

IMPROVING THE IMPLEMENTATION

of the National American Foulbrood Pest Management Plan 7

RECOGNITION TRAINING

for American Foulbrood 8

MONITORING AND AUDITING

Beekeepers' Elimination of AFB from their Beehives 9

Unregistered Apiaries 9

Annual Disease Returns 9

Certificates of Inspection 9

Notification of National American Foulbrood 9

MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Board & staff 11

Board Members 11

Management Agency Staff 11

FOREWORD

from Board Chairman **John Hartnell** & National Compliance Manager **Clifton King**

The Management Agency's priorities and activities during the 2018/19 season have been focused on the implementation of the National American Foulbrood Pest Management Plan (NPMP) to eliminate AFB from managed colonies in New Zealand.

2,904 cases (0.32% of hives) of American foulbrood (AFB) were notified in the 12 months to 31 May 2019. A similar level of AFB, 2,806 cases (0.32% of hives) were notified in the preceding 12 months. These levels of AFB represent an increase from the 0.18% of hives notified in 2012, and highlight the need to improve the execution of the NPMP.

Under the NPMP, beekeepers are responsible for eliminating AFB from their beehives, and the Management Agency is responsible for monitoring and auditing beekeeper compliance with NPMP rules.

The Management Agency ensures that beekeepers are aware of their obligations and have the required knowledge to eliminate AFB by continuing to run over 100 AFB Recognition and Refresher courses throughout the country and providing key information via a variety of channels. These activities assist beekeepers who are willing to eliminate AFB from their beehives but have limited effect on beekeepers who are unwilling or unable to accept this responsibility.

Beekeepers who are unwilling to make the effort required to eliminate AFB represent a minority of beekeepers. However, they are responsible for the majority of AFB present in New Zealand and their hives represent a constant source of reinfection for beekeepers who are striving to eliminate AFB.

In 2018/19 the Management Agency implemented a number of changes to improve our ability to identify these non-compliant beekeepers and hold them to account to comply with NPMP rules including: employing Marco Gonzalez as the National Operations Manager; transferring the management of AP2s from AsureQuality to the Management Agency; contracting an additional 17 AP2s; and changing the approach to selecting apiaries for inspection to better identify apiaries and beekeeping operations with high levels of unreported and unmanaged AFB.

These changes have resulted in the identification of three beekeeping operations in serious default of their Disease Elimination Conformity Agreement (DECA) and the destruction of 523 AFB hives owned by these beekeepers prior to 31 May 2019.

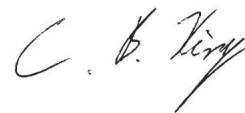
The current levy order does not provide the Management Agency with sufficient financial resources to identify all of the seriously non-compliant beekeepers, and the Management Agency initiated extensive consultation with beekeepers on proposals to increase the levy in July 2018 and March 2019. We would like to thank submitters for their submissions on the future of funding the elimination of clinical American foulbrood in New Zealand. Your submissions highlighted that improving the implementation of the NPMP is important to beekeepers and we were able to make a number of improvements to the operational strategy and funding mechanism as a result of your submissions.

In 2019/20, the Management Agency will continue to build on the progress and improvements made to the implementation of the NPMP initiated in 2018/19, and prepare for further improvements in 2020/21 funded by the new levy.

We would like to thank our staff, contractors, and all beekeepers who make the effort to eliminate AFB from their beehives. Your efforts and dedication do make a difference and we look forward to working with you over the coming year.



John Hartnell
Chairman



Clifton King
National Compliance Manager



OBJECTIVES

of the National American Foulbrood Pest Management Plan

The Biosecurity (National American Foulbrood Pest Management Plan) Order 1998 (NPMP) specifies the legal obligations and powers for the management of AFB in New Zealand. The current NPMP was amended on 18 September 2012 and supersedes the original NPMP made on 7 September 1998.

The primary objective of the NPMP is to manage AFB so as to reduce the reported incidence of American foulbrood by an average of 5% each year in managed beehives.

The secondary objectives of the NPMP are:

- to locate all places where beehives are situated and ensure that each honey bee colony is inspected at least once each year for American foulbrood; and
- to identify American foulbrood cases in beehives; and
- to eliminate American foulbrood in beehives by destroying any American foulbrood cases and associated bee products, and destroying or sterilising associated appliances.

Under the NPMP, beekeepers are responsible for eliminating AFB from their beehives. The cumulative effect of all beekeepers eliminating AFB from their beehives will be the elimination of clinical AFB from managed colonies in New Zealand.

The NPMP specifies the minimum AFB elimination obligations for all beekeepers in New Zealand through NPMP rules and provides beekeepers with the opportunity to make a greater commitment to AFB elimination through entering into a Disease Elimination Conformity Agreement (DECA) with the Management Agency. In recognition of this commitment, the Management Agency provides an exemption from Certificate of Inspection (COI) obligations and may also permit the salvage of appliances through sterilisation.

The Management Agency is responsible for monitoring and auditing beekeeper compliance with NPMP rules, and the AFB elimination performance of beekeepers who have entered into a DECA with the Management Agency. The NPMP provides the Management Agency with legal powers to enforce the implementation of the NPMP.

Under the NPMP beekeepers are responsible for eliminating AFB from their beehives.



REPORTED INCIDENCE

of American Foulbrood

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

These statistics suggest that the level of AFB has remained constant over the past two years. However, it is important to note that the Management Agency changed its approach to compliance and enforcement in 2018/19, and this resulted in the Management Agency detecting 523 cases of AFB in hives owned by three beekeepers who were in default of their DECA. If the Management Agency had not changed its approach to compliance and enforcement, only 2,381 cases (0.26% of hives) of AFB would have been notified in the 12 months to 31 May 2019.

The annual reported incidence of AFB since 1998 is shown in Figure 1. Since the NPMP was last amended in 2012, the reported incidence of AFB has increased from 0.18% of hives to 0.32% in response to rapid growth in the industry since 2012, with hive numbers increasing from 424,065 to 921,522, and beekeepers from 3,804 to 9,378 (Figure 2.)

These statistics highlight the need to improve the implementation of the NPMP.

Reported Incidence of AFB, 1998 to 2019

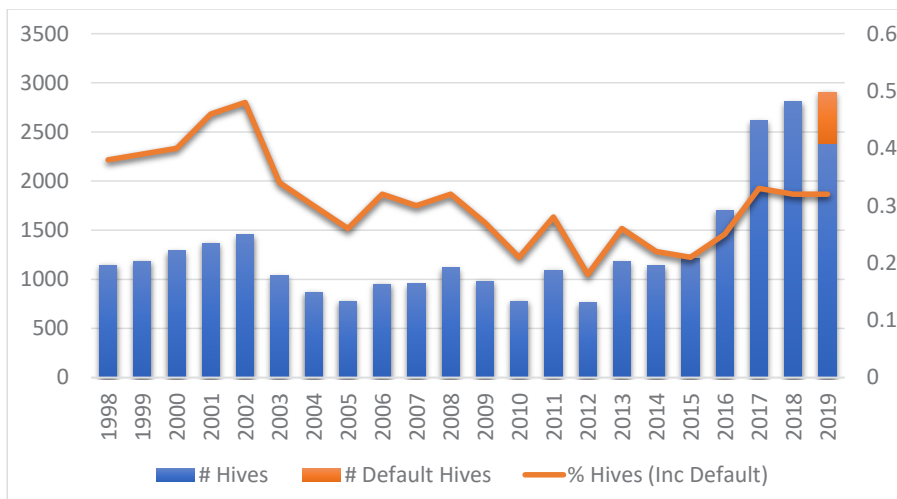


Figure 1. Reported Incidence of AFB, 1998 to 2019.

Beekeeper, apiary and hive statistics, 1998 to 2019

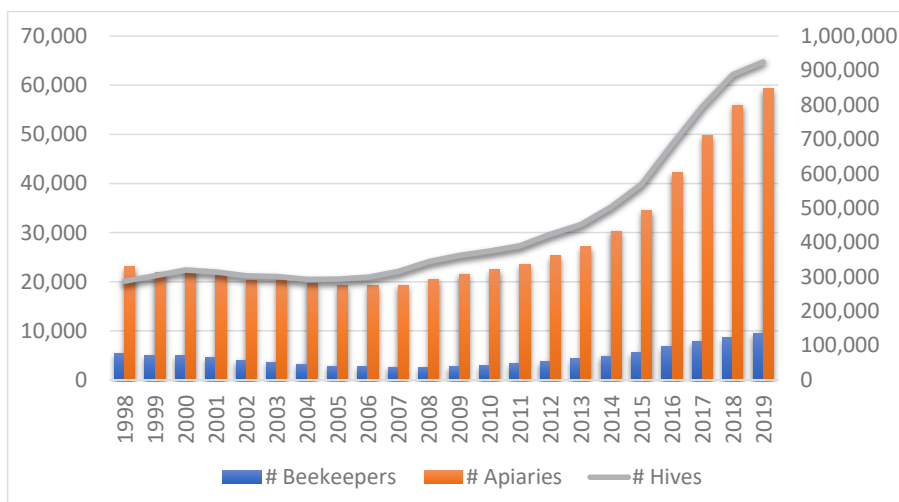


Figure 2. Beekeeper, apiary and hive statistics, 1998 to 2019.



2018-2019 AFB HEAT MAP

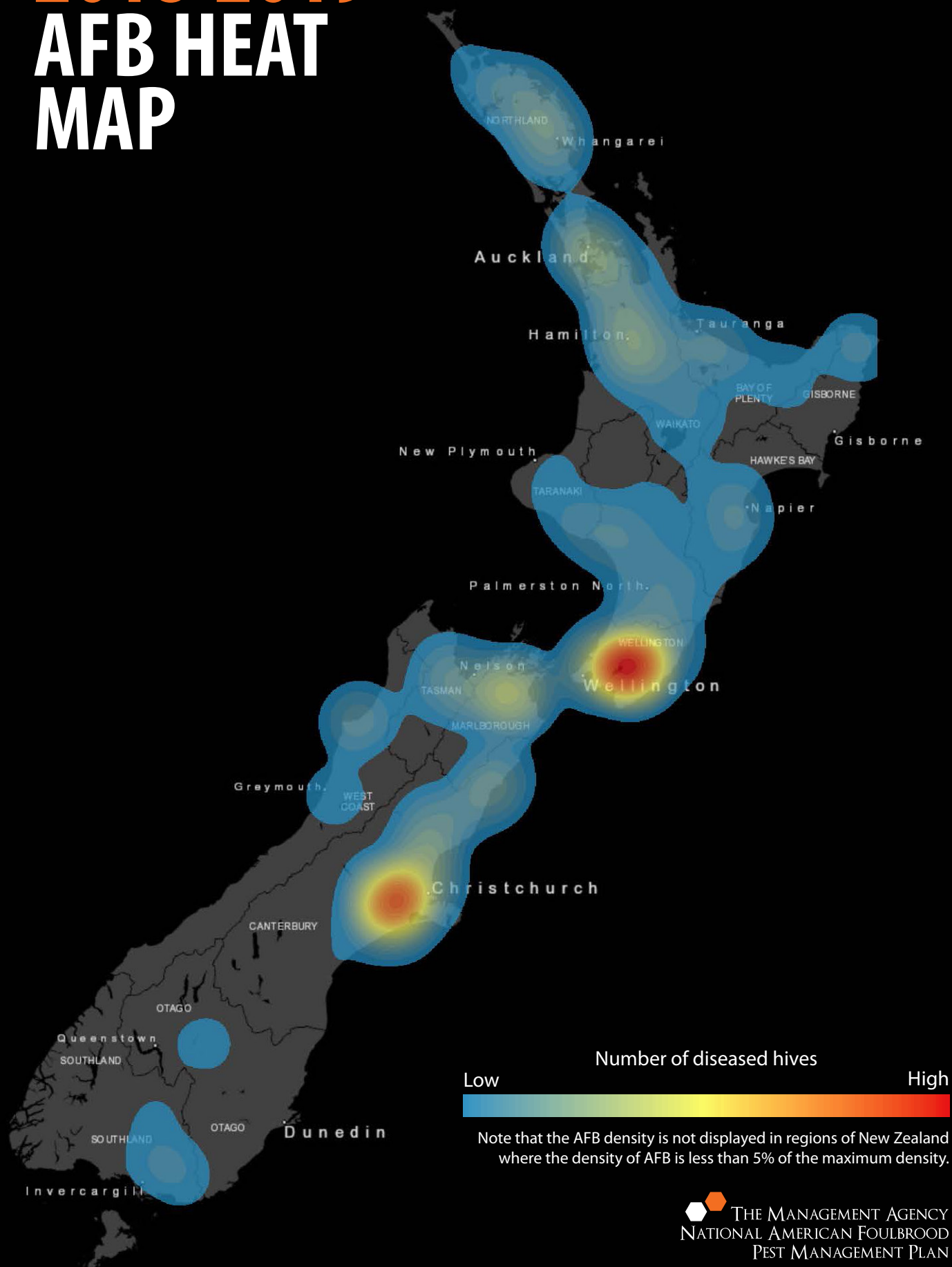


Figure 3. 2018/19 AFB heat map.

IMPROVING THE IMPLEMENTATION

of the National American Foulbrood Pest Management Plan

In June 2016, the Management Agency Board recognised that the historical approach to implementing the NPMP was no longer suitable for an industry that was experiencing massive growth in beekeeper numbers and hives. The Board initiated the development of a 5-year strategy to eliminate American foulbrood, and subsequently recruited two full-time professional managers with extensive experience in biosecurity incursion investigation and response and American foulbrood elimination.

Clifton King was employed as National Compliance Manager in November 2017, and Marco Gonzalez was employed as National Operations Manager with an Authorised Person Level 1 (AP1) warrant in October 2018. The Management Agency also initiated a recruitment round for additional Authorised Persons Level 2 (AP2s). This attracted a large number of applications from which 17 quality applicants were selected, increasing the number of AP2s contracted to the Management Agency to 37. In November 2018, the Management Agency transferred the management of AP2s fromASUREQuality Limited to the Management Agency.

These changes have enabled the Management Agency to be much more responsive to beekeeper notifications of disease and non-compliant behaviour.

The Management Agency is working towards ensuring that all beehives are inspected for AFB at least once per year by inspecting the beehives owned by beekeepers in default of their COI requirements, and changing the focus of its apiary inspections from 'seeking to find hives with AFB' to 'seeking to identify beekeepers who are not implementing the AFB elimination practices specified in their DECA'. 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 non-compliance (AP2 inspection finds AFB in more than 10% of an individual beekeeper's hives), and in these instances the Management Agency is cancelling DECAs, serving notices of direction and where required, acting on default.

These changes resulted in the identification of three beekeeping operations in serious default of their DECA and destruction of 523 AFB hives owned by these beekeepers in the year ending 31 May 2019.

The Management Agency's enforcement actions have prevented these hives from continuing to be a source of infection for hives owned by neighbouring beekeepers.

The Management Agency does not have sufficient funding for the resources required to identify all of the seriously non-compliant beekeepers hiding amongst the crowd of 9,300 New Zealand beekeepers. Therefore, the Management Agency initiated extensive consultation with beekeepers on proposals to increase the levy in July 2018 and March 2019. The Management Agency subsequently made a number of improvements to the proposal based upon beekeepers' submissions and has requested the Minister to make a new American Foulbrood – Hive and Beekeeper Levy Order.

The Management Agency acknowledges that many more improvements need to be made before the NPMP is delivering on the promise made in 1997 to eliminate clinical AFB from managed colonies in New Zealand. As a Management Agency we are committed to working with beekeepers to turn this promise into reality.

The Management Agency is committed to improving the implementation of the NPMP.

RECOGNITION TRAINING

for American Foulbrood



The Management Agency ensures that all beekeepers are aware of their obligations and have the required knowledge to eliminate AFB by: offering education through AFB Recognition and Refresher Courses; maintaining a wealth of information that informs beekeepers of their obligations and how to eliminate AFB on the afb.org.nz website; delivering presentations to beekeeping groups around the country; and responding to beekeeper enquiries via phone and e-mail.

The Management Agency ran 101 AFB recognition courses in the year to 31 May 2019. 1,314 beekeepers attended these courses with 1,122 beekeepers (85%) passing the course test at the first attempt. An additional 105 beekeepers sat and passed the test by Proctor without attending the course.

The Management Agency ran 15 AFB Refresher courses in the year to 31 May 2019. These were attended by 181 beekeepers.



Learning how to recognise AFB and its symptoms is essential knowledge for every beekeeper.



MONITORING & AUDITING BEEKEEPERS'

Elimination of AFB from their Beehives

The Management Agency monitors progress towards the achievement of NPMP objectives by monitoring and auditing beekeepers' AFB elimination actions, notifications and statements described in Figure 4, in addition to monitoring the annual reported incidence of AFB.

The Management Agency pays particular attention to the absence of beekeeper notifications and statements including:

- Notification of places as apiaries
- Annual Disease Returns
- Certificates of Inspection
- Notification of AFB.

Unregistered apiaries

The Management Agency investigates all reports for suspected unregistered apiaries. 49 unregistered apiaries were identified in the year to 31 May 2019. 47 were registered after the Management Agency contacted the beekeeper concerned and 2 apiaries were destroyed.

Annual Disease Returns

67% of beekeepers (6,451 out of 9,638) completed their Annual Disease Return by 1 June 2019, compared to 66% by 1 June 2018.

As at 30 September 2018, 10% (841) of beekeepers were still in default of their 2018 Annual Disease Return obligations. Sixty-two of these beekeepers had entered into DECAs with the Management Agency. The Management Agency cancelled these agreements, and these beekeepers were required to complete a COI.

Certificates of Inspection

72% of beekeepers (3,131 out of 4,334) completed their COI by 15 December 2018, compared to 64% by 15 December 2017.

558 beekeepers were in default of both their 2018 COI and their 2018 Annual Disease Return obligations. These beekeepers were issued with default notices under section 128 of the Biosecurity Act 1993, and the Management Agency scheduled default inspections of their apiaries. The cost of these inspections is recovered from the offending beekeepers.

Notification for National American Foulbrood

In the 12 months to 31 May 2019, 2,318 cases of AFB were notified to the Management Agency from hives owned by 571 beekeepers as a result of either beekeeper notifications or AP2 inspections. A further 523 cases of AFB were detected as a result of AP2 inspections of the hives owned by three beekeepers in serious default of their DECA.

The AFB notification data highlights that fewer than 6% of beekeepers notified cases of AFB to the Management Agency, and that these beekeepers notified an average of 4.1 cases per beekeeper. In contrast, AP2 inspections found an average of 174 cases of AFB per beekeeper in serious default of their DECA.

The large number of AFB cases found by AP2 inspection of these three beekeepers hives highlights that beekeepers with high levels of AFB are likely to substantially underreport their cases of AFB.

This presents the Management Agency with a difficult challenge. While the majority of the 8,810 beekeepers who did not notify any cases of AFB to the Management Agency will have little to no clinical AFB in their hives, a small number of beekeepers with very high levels of AFB will be hiding amongst them. Identifying these beekeepers and ensuring that they comply with NPMP rules is critical to the success of the pest management plan.

The Management Agency is actively seeking to identify beekeeping operations with high levels of unnotified AFB. All AFB notifications are routinely assessed to identify neighbouring apiaries that may be the source of disease. The Management Agency prioritises apiary inspections in locations where clusters of AFB notifications suggest that unmanaged AFB may be present in one or more apiaries. This is a resource-intensive activity, and the additional funding provided by the new levy is required to ensure that the Management Agency has the resources required to identify all of the beekeepers with high levels of unmanaged AFB to ensure that they also comply with the NPMP for the benefit of the beekeeping industry.

Notifying all of your cases of AFB will assist the Management Agency to identify neighbouring apiaries with high levels of unmanaged AFB.



National American Foulbrood Pest Management Plan Elimination Framework

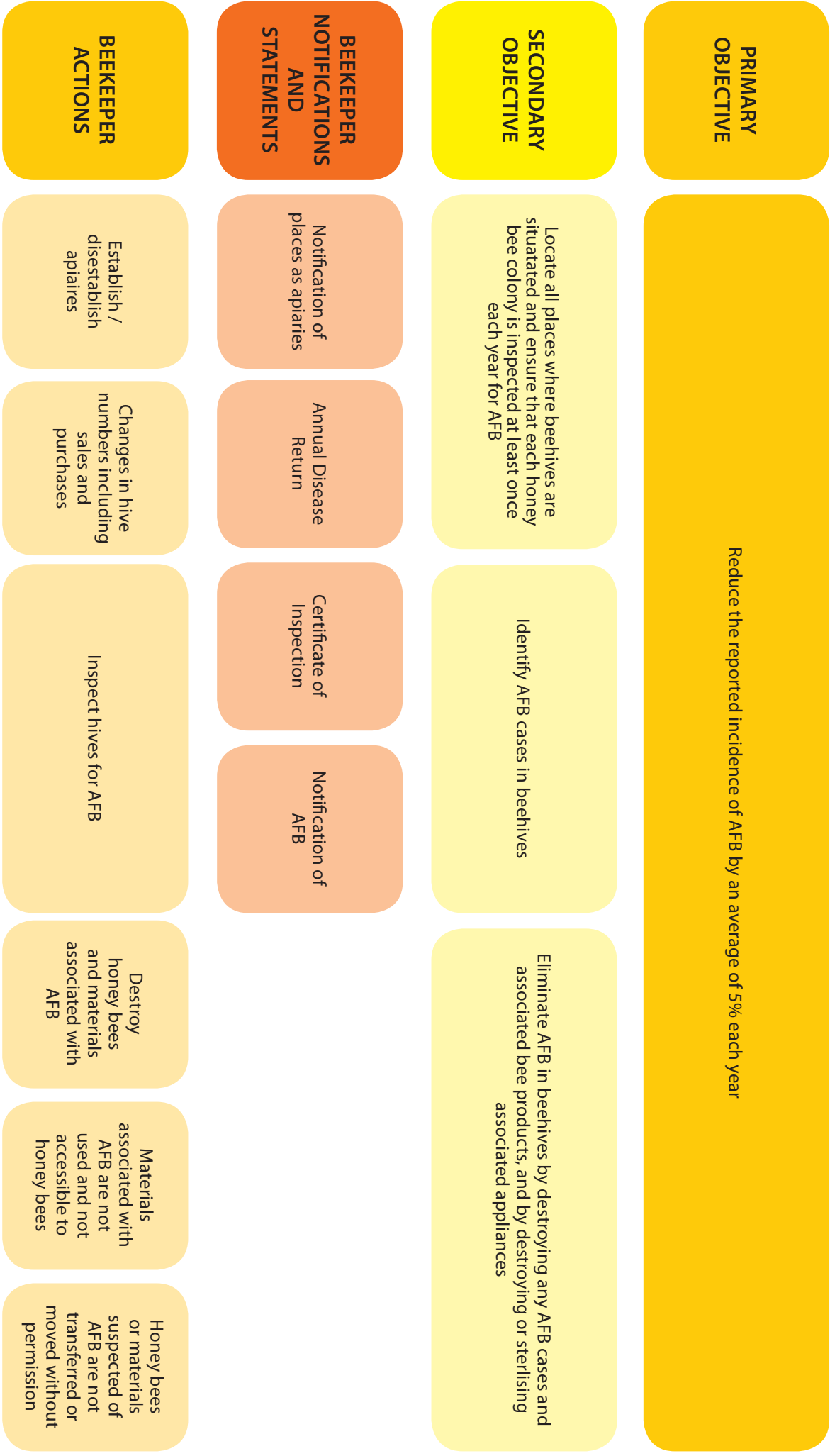


Figure 4. National American Foulbrood Pest Management Plan Elimination Framework.

MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Board and Staff

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