



 THE MANAGEMENT AGENCY  
NATIONAL AMERICAN FOULBROOD  
PEST MANAGEMENT PLAN

# Annual Report

2019 / 2020









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# 1. Welcome

from Board Chairman **Russell Marsh** &  
National Compliance Manager **Clifton King**

**The Management Agency's priorities and activities during 2019/20 have been focused on the implementation of the National American Foulbrood Pest Management Plan (NPMP) to eliminate AFB from managed colonies in New Zealand.**

Under the 2019/2020 leadership of recently departed Board Chair John Hartnell, the Management Agency implemented an improved apiary inspection approach, brought the management of AP2s in-house to make more cost-effective use of levy payer funds, and increased staffing to more effectively identify high-risk beekeepers and enforce the NPMP rules. John was also instrumental in our commitment to replace the ApiWeb/Apiary database system with a modern, fit-for-purpose system. John Hartnell resigned from Chair of the Board, effective December 2020. John, thank you for your guidance and commitment. John was replaced by new Board Chair Russell Marsh, a valued Board member since 2016.

In 2016/2017 we developed the American Foulbrood 5-Year Strategy in consultation with the beekeeping industry. Beekeeper feedback pointed to overwhelming concerns about the AFB risks associated with non-compliant beekeepers and that not enough action appeared to occur when non-compliance reports were made. At this time, our contract withASUREQuality included 15 hours of Apiary Advisor time per week to manage the inspections of 21 contracted AP2s.

Fast-forward 3 years and we employ two full-time Operations Managers (AP1s) to lead a team of 48 AP2s. This growth has provided the capacity and capability required to:

- respond to the volume of non-compliance reports received.
- ensure that evidence of high rates of unreported AFB is investigated.
- undertake appropriate compliance and enforcement actions to mitigate the risk of AFB spreading to beehives owned by neighbouring beekeepers.

Enforcement action has increased and makes greater use of the full set of legal powers available to enforce the AFB PMP. This includes directing beekeepers to destroy honeybees and materials associated with AFB, ensuring that all diseased beehives are destroyed, and recovering costs from offending beekeepers. These recovered costs fund compliance and enforcement activities which reduces the impact on compliant levy payer funds.



"I'm proud to have worked with such a dedicated team and I depart with confidence knowing that the steps taken will ultimately deliver the goal of elimination of AFB from managed colonies within New Zealand." – **John Hartnell**

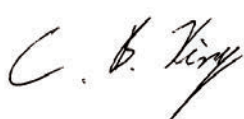
The colony and beekeeper levy notified in April 2020 is enabling the Management Agency to replace ApiWeb with a modern, purpose-built system. The new system is expected to launch in February 2021. Among the myriad benefits, key changes for beekeepers include a simpler, user-friendly process when filing an annual disease return and the ability to register apiaries and notify cases of AFB using a phone app while at the apiary site – even if there's no cellular coverage.

As we look forward, the Biosecurity (AFB PMP) Order 1998 expires on April 2023. This provides the opportunity for the Management Agency to conduct an extensive review and submit a proposal to the Minister. This review will be initiated in mid-2021 and involve several rounds of consultation where beekeepers can provide their input on what goals, disease control strategy, and statutory powers should be used to manage AFB over the next 10 years. This is an exciting time for AFB control. We look forward to working with the beekeeping industry to understand how the industry wants to move forward and further improve the elimination of AFB from managed beehives in New Zealand.

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



Russell Marsh  
Chairman



Clifton King  
National Compliance Manager



## 2. 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 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 honeybee colony is inspected at least once each year for American foulbrood.
- to identify American foulbrood cases in beehives.
- 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 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 with the Management Agency. In recognition of this commitment, the Management Agency (DECA) 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.



# 3. Reported Incidence

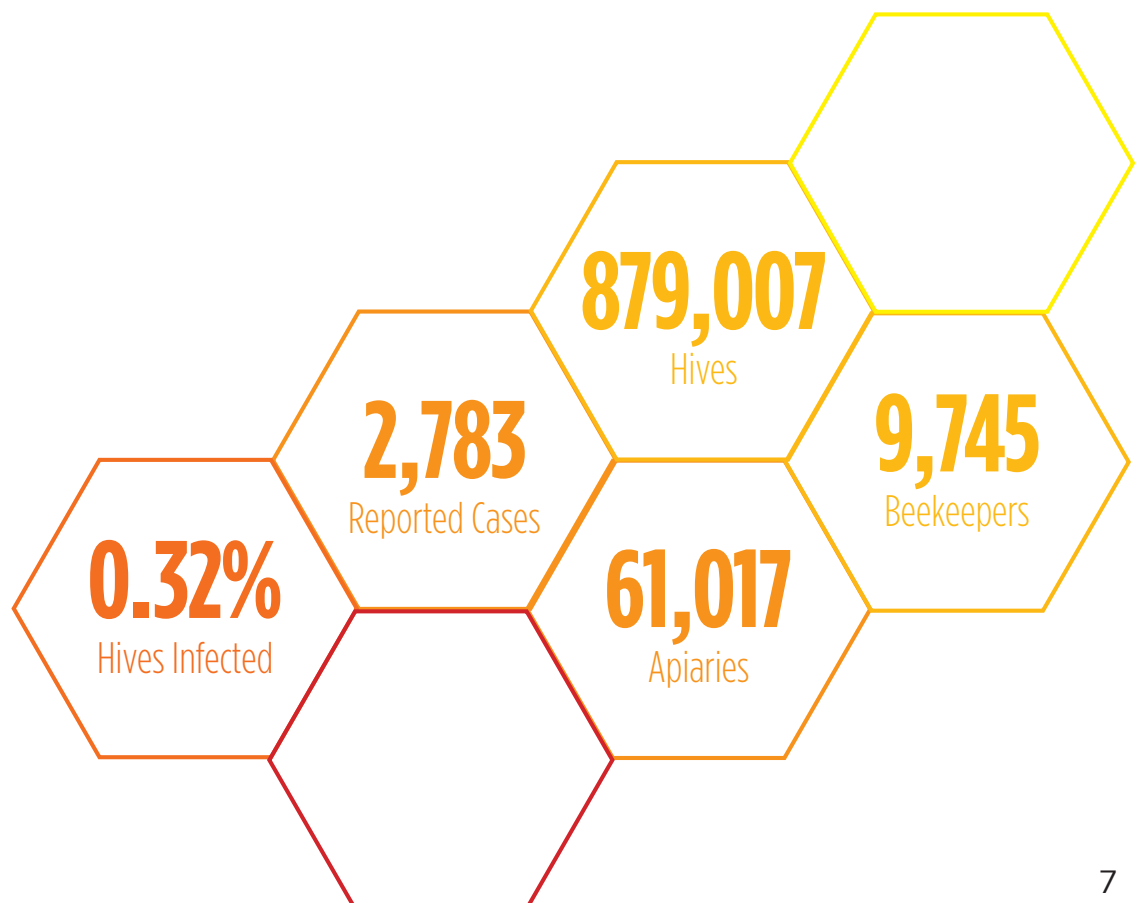
of American Foulbrood over a  
12 month period

**In the 12 months to 31 May 2020, 2,783 cases (0.32% of hives) of AFB were notified, compared with 2,904 cases (0.32% of hives) of AFB notified in the 12 months to 31 May 2019.**

Data from the past two years shows reduction in the number of AFB cases while the percentage of hives has not dropped. This could be attributed to the Management Agency's actions targeting high-risk beekeepers. Evidence suggests that if action had not been taken to identify and hold high-risk beekeepers to account, many of the AFB hives in question would not have been reported.

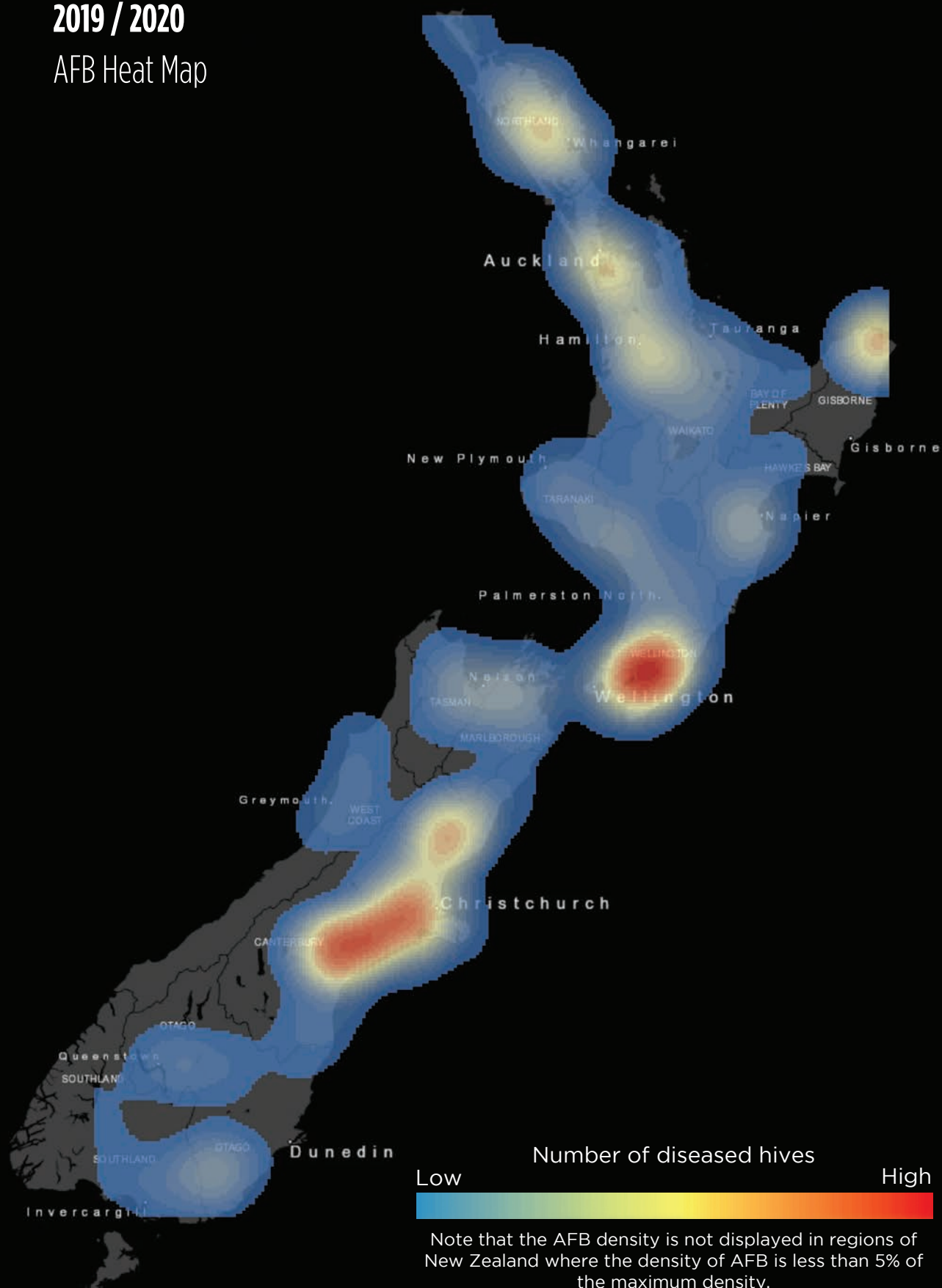
The annual reported incidence of AFB since 1998 is shown in Figure 1. Since the NPMP was last amended in 2012 the reported incidence of AFB has increased from 0.18% of hives to 0.32% in response to rapid growth in the industry since 2012, with hive numbers increasing from 424,065 to 879,007, and beekeepers from 3,804 to 9,745 (Figure 2).

Looking forward, the Management Agency board and team are committed to continuing effective and efficient implementation of the NPMP alongside New Zealand beekeepers.



2019 / 2020

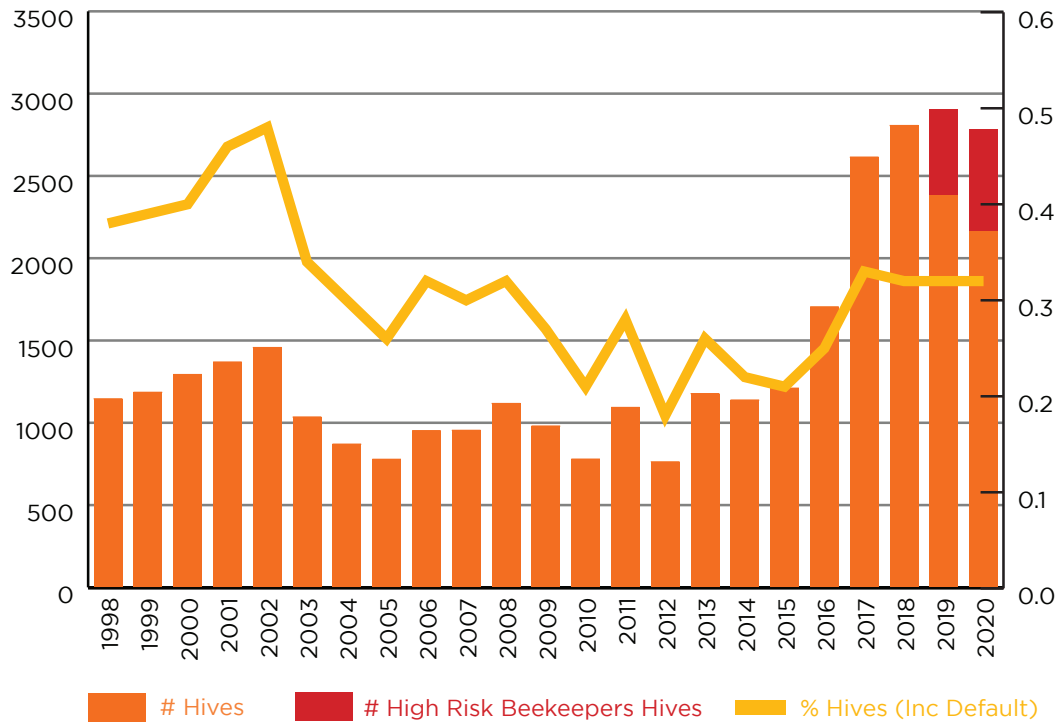
AFB Heat Map





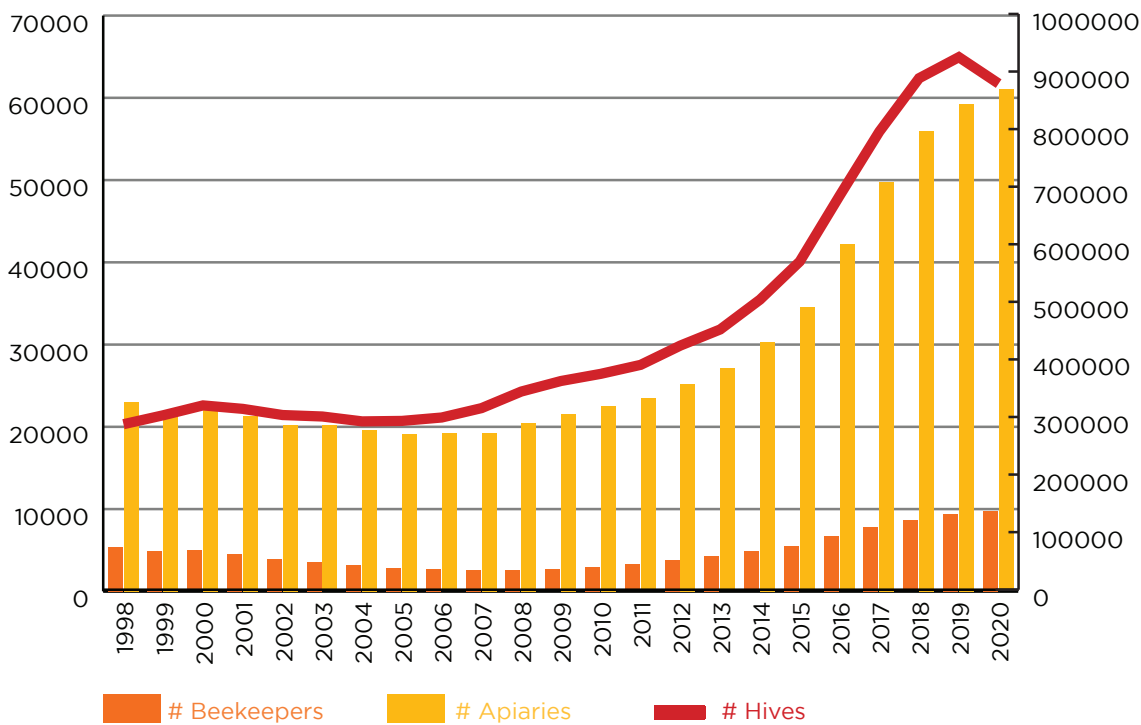
### Reported Incidence of AFB, 1998 to 2020

Figure 1



### Beekeeper, Apiary and Hive Statistics, 1998 to 2020

Figure 2



# 4. Progress Update

## Implementation of the National American Foulbrood Pest Management Plan

**The 2019/2020 year saw the continued implementation of our 5-year strategy to eliminate American foulbrood alongside some major changes.**

Two professional managers with extensive experience in biosecurity incursion investigation and American foulbrood elimination now work alongside 48 contracted AP2s. As a result, our responsiveness to beekeeper notifications of disease and non-compliance has continued to increase. Additionally, our apiary inspections shifted focus from 'finding hives with AFB' to 'identifying beekeepers who are not implementing the AFB elimination practices specified in their DECA'.

These changes resulted in the identification of 9 high-risk beekeeping operations where AFB was present in over 10% of hives. The Management Agency's enforcement actions resulted in the destruction of 620 AFB hives owned by these beekeepers and 3 high-risk beekeeper operations identified the previous year, in the year ending 31 May 2020, preventing these hives from continuing to be a source of infection for hives owned by neighbouring beekeepers.

### ApiWeb Replacement

A vendor was selected to develop the system replacing ApiWeb. The new system is due to launch February 2021 and has been designed to improve the quality and accessibility of NPMP information while making it as easy as possible for beekeepers to comply with their NPMP apiary and AFB notification and ADR reporting requirements and update their hive information quickly and easily.

### Operational Plan

The Management Agency AFB PMP Operational Plan was developed in January 2020. It describes how we implement the PMP. This can be viewed on our website ([afb.org.nz/operational-plan-2020](http://afb.org.nz/operational-plan-2020)) and a link was emailed to all subscribed beekeepers in January 2020.

### New AFB Levy

The government approved a new levy to fund the implementation of the PMP following extensive consultation by the Management Agency with beekeepers in 2018 and 2019. The new levy enables the Management Agency to continue improving the implementation of the PMP as we work toward eliminating AFB from the beekeeping industry in New Zealand. This is important work, and we are grateful for the support of the beekeeping industry.

### Our Commitment

The Management Agency remains committed to eliminating AFB from managed colonies in New Zealand. An important part of this process is ensuring that compliant beekeepers are not adversely affected by non-compliant neighbours. We will continue to work closely with beekeepers and exercise our full range of legal powers to achieve a reality where AFB no longer exists in the beekeeping industry.



"We're proud to work alongside the New Zealand beekeeping industry toward the elimination of AFB."


## 5. Recognition Training of American Foulbrood

**While COVID-19 reduced the number of training courses available this past year, education remains a priority for the Management Agency.**

It is vital that all beekeepers are aware of their obligations and have the required knowledge to eliminate AFB. The Management Agency offers education through AFB recognition and refresher courses, maintains a wealth of information outlining beekeeper obligations and guidance on how to eliminate AFB on the [afb.org.nz](http://afb.org.nz) website, presents to beekeeping groups around the country, and responds to beekeeper enquiries via phone and email.

The Management Agency ran 68 AFB recognition courses in the year to 31 May 2020. 181 beekeepers attended these courses as a refresher and 710 sat the AFB recognition test with 671 beekeepers (95%) passing the course test at the first attempt. An additional 89 beekeepers sat and passed the test by proctor without attending the course.

12 AFB refresher courses were run in the year to 31 May 2020. These were attended by 210 beekeepers.



“It is vital that all beekeepers are aware of their obligations and have the required knowledge to eliminate AFB.”

## 6. 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 3) 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. 50 unregistered apiaries were identified in the year to 31 May 2020. 46 were registered after the Management Agency contacted the beekeeper concerned and 4 apiaries were destroyed.

#### Annual Disease Returns

Return numbers, as at the due date (1st June), were low this year. This has been attributed to the impact of COVID-19 and beekeepers taking time to resolve double-counting of colonies on seasonal apiaries.

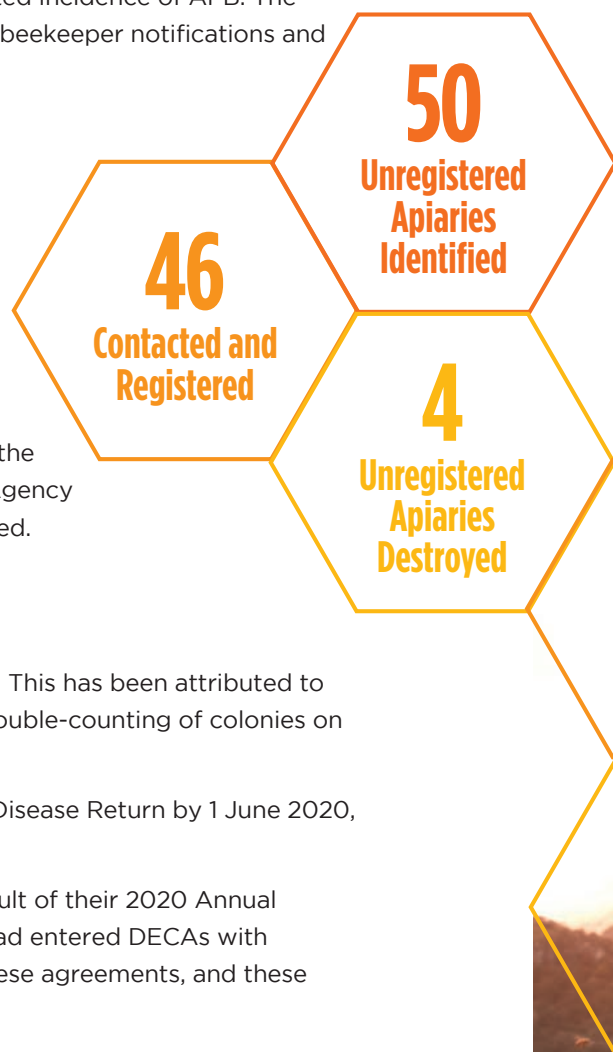
52% of beekeepers (4,762 out of 9,975) completed their Annual Disease Return by 1 June 2020, compared to 67% in 2019.

As of 4 August 2020, 14% (1,442) of beekeepers were still in default of their 2020 Annual Disease Return obligations. Seventy-three of these beekeepers had entered DECAs with the Management Agency. The Management Agency cancelled these agreements, and these beekeepers were required to complete a COI.

#### Certificates of Inspection

70% of beekeepers (3,162 out of 4,548) completed their COI by 15 December 2019, compared to 72% in 2018.

626 beekeepers were in default of both their 2019 COI and their 2019 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 invoiced to the offending beekeepers.





## Notification of AFB Apiaries

In the 12 months to 31 May 2020, 2,163 cases of AFB were notified to the Management Agency from hives owned by 585 beekeepers because of either beekeeper notifications or AP2 inspections. A further 620 cases of AFB were detected because of AP2 inspections of the hives owned by 12 high-risk beekeeping operations.

The AFB notification data highlights that 6% of beekeepers notified cases of AFB to the Management Agency and that these beekeepers notified an average of 3.7 cases per beekeeper. In contrast, AP2 inspections found an average of 52 cases of AFB per high-risk beekeeping operation.

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

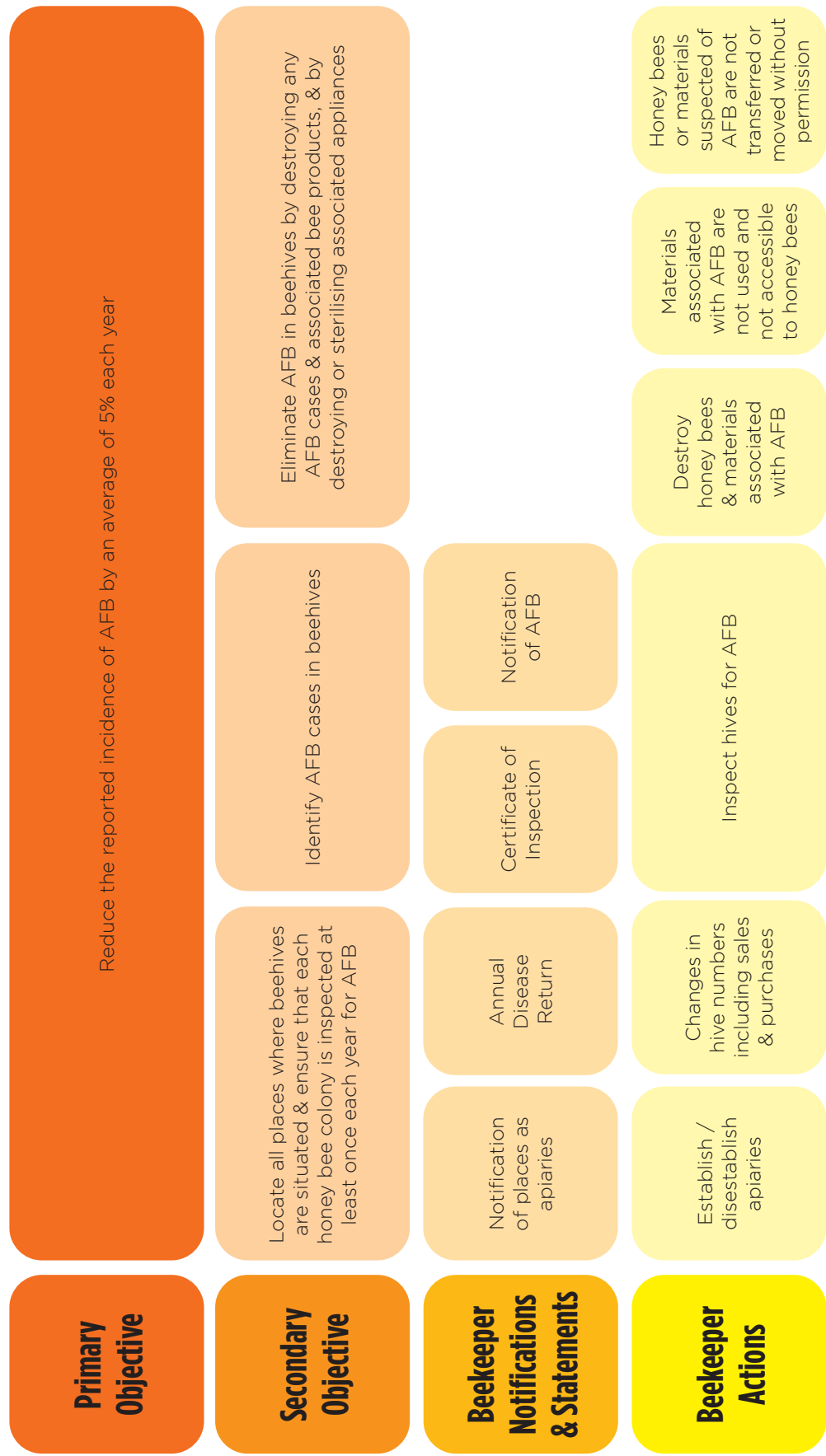
This presents the Management Agency with a difficult challenge. While the majority of the 9,147 beekeepers who did not notify any cases of AFB to the Management Agency will have little to no AFB in their hives, a small number of beekeepers with very high levels of AFB will be hiding among them. Identifying these beekeepers and ensuring that they comply with NPMP rules is critical to the success of the PMP.

The Management Agency is working 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 funding provided by the new levy provides the Management Agency with the resources required to identify all beekeepers with high levels of unmanaged AFB to ensure that they comply with the NPMP for the benefit of the beekeeping industry.



National American Foulbrood Pest Management Plan Elimination Framework

Figure 3



# 7. Management Agency

## Board and Staff

### 2020 Board Members

- **Chair:** Russell Marsh
- **Deputy Chair:** Val Graham
- Gabriel Torres
- Jason Ward
- Mark Dingle
- Murray Lewis
- Dennis Crowley
- **Advisor to Board:** Hayley Pragert
- **MPI Observer:** John Walsh



### Departing Board Members

Thank you for your valued contribution toward eliminating AFB in managed New Zealand apiaries.

- John Hartnell, Chair (Dec 2020)
- Kim Poynter, Deputy Chair (Dec 2020)

### Management Agency Staff

- Clifton King
- Marco Gonzalez
- Dwayne Hill
- Janette Gwilliam
- Tracey Gonzalez
- Leonie Elliot-Mason







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