



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

**25 June 2021
(Friday)**

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



Summary

2020/21 has been a busy year for the Management Agency as we have modernised our systems and transitioned our approach to delivering AFB elimination services from the old to the new.

The Management Agency has established a dedicated operational team with the sole purpose of implementing the National American Foulbrood Pest Management Plan to eliminate AFB. In June 2020 Tracey Gonzalez and Leonie Elliott-Mason joined the Management Agency as full time Apiary Coordinators, and in July the delivery of apiary registrar services transitioned fromASUREQuality to the Management Agency.

Dwayne Hill also joined the Management Agency in June 2020 as the Operations Manager responsible for the northern region, with Marco Gonzalez continuing to be responsible for the southern region. Rhiana Scott joined the Management Agency as a part time Apiary Coordinator in January 2021 to ensure that the Management Agency had sufficient capacity to assist beekeepers with the transition to HiveHub, and to ensure timely service delivery to beekeepers during periods of peak demand.

In March 2021 the Management Agency replaced ApiWeb and the Apiary Database with HiveHub. HiveHub is a modern, purpose-built system designed to make AFB PMP compliance and reporting easy. Beekeepers have quickly transitioned to using HiveHub with over 2,000 beekeepers logging in within 24 hours of go-live on 11 March 2021. As of June 2021, over 9,200 beekeepers have logged in and are using HiveHub.

HiveHub has already made a major difference to beekeeper submission of Annual Disease Returns (ADRs). The proportion of beekeepers submitting their ADR by 1 June is up by 44% on last year (74% vs 52%) and up by 16% (74% vs 64%) on a typical year. The proportion of beekeepers submitting their ADR online has increased also. 94% of ADRs were submitted online this year compared to 70% of ADRs submitted online in previous years.

While 2020/21 has been a year focussed on modernising our systems, the Management Agency has kept its focus on implementing the pest management plan and adapting to the changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

885 beekeepers were trained to recognise AFB in the 12 months to 31 December 2020. The number of courses held, and beekeepers trained is down significantly on previous years as the Management Agency cancelled courses to comply with COVID-19 restrictions, and increased awareness of the importance of social distancing reduced demand for courses.

The Management Agency has maintained its focus on investigating reports of non-compliant behaviour, searching for apiaries and beekeeping operations with high levels of unreported AFB, and completing follow up inspections on previously identified high risk beekeeping operations.

2,186 apiaries were inspected by AP2s for AFB during 2020/21. These inspections resulted in the identification of a further 12 High Risk Beekeeping Operations in addition to the 12 identified in previous years. The High Risk Beekeeping Operations identified in 2020/21 are significantly smaller than those identified in previous years with total colony numbers ranging between 5 and 185 (average 47).

The Management Agency inspects all beehives owned by High Risk Beekeepers twice each year, destroying infected hives and assessing the risk of beekeepers' equipment on storage. These enforcement activities are cost recoverable. This approach to enforcement has resulted in dramatic reductions in the prevalence of AFB in the affected beekeeper's hives, and corresponding reductions in the AFB infection risk for neighbouring beekeepers.

Reported Incidence of American Foulbrood, June 2018 to May 2019

2,526 cases (0.31% of colonies) of AFB were notified in the 12 months to 31 May 2021. 2,783 cases (0.32% of hives) of AFB were notified in the 12 months to 31 May 2020. The substantial drop in the number of colonies notified with AFB (257 cases) has only resulted in a small reduction in the percentage of colonies affected by AFB (0.01% of colonies) due to the national decline in colony numbers.

Beekeeper, Apiary and Colony Numbers

Beekeeper and apiary numbers have continued to grow while colony numbers have declined. As of 1 June 2021, there were 10,034 registered beekeepers (up from 9,745 on 1 June 2020), 61,623 apiaries (up from 61,017 on 1 June 2020) and 817,321 colonies (down from 879,007 on 1 June 2020).

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

7,603 (74%) of beekeepers had submitted an ADR by 1 June 2021, well up from the 5,200 (52% of beekeepers) ADRs that had been received by the same time the previous year. The dramatic improvement in return rate is believed to be the result of both recovery from the delays associated with the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020, and the benefits of HiveHub making it easier for beekeepers to submit their ADR. For comparative purposes 64% of beekeepers had submitted their ADR by 1 June 2018 and 1 June 2019.

Those beekeepers who had not submitted their ADRs on time were sent reminders before being sent a warning that continued failure to submit an ADR is a breach of their Disease Elimination Conformity Agreement, and that their Disease Elimination Conformity Agreement would be cancelled if the ADR is not submitted before the deadline. Beekeepers without a DECA that fail to submit an ADR by 1 June are ineligible to apply for a DECA.

2,984 Certificates of Inspection were completed and submitted by 15 December 2021. This represents 64% of non-DECA holders. The Management Agency scheduled default inspections for beekeepers that defaulted on both their 2020 ADR and COI.

Disease Elimination Conformity Agreements (DECA)

51% of beekeepers currently hold a Disease Elimination Conformity Agreement.

AFB Recognition Course Training

AFB Recognition Training in 2020 was impacted by the national COVID-19 lockdown, and the subsequent Auckland lockdown. Training courses were cancelled during alert levels 3 and 4, and the Management Agency developed protocols to enable training to safely occur under alert level 2.

Calendar Year	Courses	Test via Proctor	Participants
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
2019	96	127	1,336
2020	64	8	885

AFB Authorised Person Inspection Activity

2,186 apiaries were inspected in 2020/21 up from 1,524 in 2019/20. 2.4% of hives and 9.1% of apiaries inspected by AP2s were found to have AFB.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank the Marco Gonzalez, Dwayne Hill, Janette Gwilliam, Tracey Gonzalez, Leonie Elliot-Mason, and Rhiana Scott for their continued focus on delivering services to beekeepers at the same time as working on the development and implementation of HiveHub.

I would also like to make special thanks to Byron Taylor and Evan Yates from AsureQuality for their professionalism and assistance to support the seamless transition of systems and services from AsureQuality to the Management Agency.

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The Management Agency, National American Foulbrood Pest Management Plan