

Issue 4 (September 2024)

Update from the General Manager

The Management Agency has been working closely with the office of the Minister for Biosecurity and the policy and legal teams at Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) on the proposed changes to the AFB NPMP. We are aware that keeping beekeepers updated about each step of the NPMP review process is important. A draft timeline of the NPMP review process, prepared by MPI, can be found here: [Timeline of the AFB NPMP review](#).



Multiple proposals of the NPMP review asked for the AFB Management Agency to be an independent agency. The Minister for Biosecurity directed MPI to commission an independent review of the governance and administration of the NPMP. The review into the governance structure of the NPMP began in mid- June and is now complete. In addition to interviews with me, the independent reviewer also interviewed the Management Agency Chair, past and current Board members, Apiculture New Zealand, and other key parties from the sector. The final report is with MPI who will brief the Minister on the key findings.

Changes at the Board level

In June 2024, Gabriel Torres and Jason Ward completed their respective terms of over six years on the Management Agency Board. Both brought strong knowledge and expertise of the commercial beekeeping sector and have witnessed several changes within this organisation. We would like to recognise and thank both Gabriel and Jason for their contribution to the Management Agency.

In July 2024, the Management Agency Board welcomed Lubomir Dudek to replace one of the two commercial Board vacancies. This brings the representation on the Management Agency Board to an even split of three hobbyists and three commercial beekeepers. The Management Agency Board will continue to hold the second vacancy, as a cost-saving measure. The Management Agency's Board and staff profiles can be found here: <https://afb.org.nz/management-agency/>

Key updates: AFB NPMP Change Programme

All beekeepers were sent a copy of the Change Programme (either by email or post) in August 2024 which outlines the Management Agency's five focus areas (i.e. Priorities). A link to the Change Programme booklet can be found here: [The Management Agency's Five priorities \(Change Programme\)](#)

Over the past couple of months, and in addition to their existing workloads, my Operations Managers and senior AFB Recognition Course trainer (Brice Horner) have worked hard to complete drafting technical content for each of the eight modules, as part of the Commercial Beekeepers training. Each module will focus on best practice AFB management procedures that can be easily incorporated by commercial beekeepers, are effective, and economically sound.



Over the coming months, this content will be refined further with the addition of videos, images, and helpful website links. I am looking forward to seeing the final product. The mode of training delivery is yet to be confirmed. We will be engaging with commercial beekeepers on their thoughts for the logistics of training delivery in early 2025.

DECA reviews

The DECA review project has been paused while we re-assess our approach. The Management Agency does not believe that the current DECAs, many of which are over 25 years old, adequately identify all parts of a beekeeping operation that can act as potential sources of origin or spread for AFB. We will be consulting with beekeepers in future months, to seek their thoughts on the proposed structure of DECAs and ways to future-proof them.

Comms and engagement

This week, Dwayne Hill and I spoke to the Taranaki beekeeping club. It was an interactive evening with lots of great questions from those in attendance. My Operations Managers and I have continued to receive invites to speak to beekeepers. We will do our best to get around the country, whilst being mindful of travel expenditure. An alternative we are keen to explore is holding regular webinars for beekeepers.

The Management Agency's current website is being reviewed, as it is inadequate to support future information requirements. We are currently re-designing the structure of the current website, to make it user-friendly, easily navigable, and containing helpful information for all beekeepers. The New Beekeepers welcome pack is also under review.

Another area of improvement we are committed to addressing is the Management Agency's steps for decision-making, especially when it includes spore testing. Please keep an eye out for future Industry announcements from us that covers these topics.

Investing in our frontline staff

Over the course of three days in late July 2024, the Management Agency held a 'Train the Trainer' Day and the Annual AP2 Refresher training days. At times, our AFB Recognition Trainers and AP2s are the key Management Agency personnel most beekeepers will ever meet. Therefore, it is crucial that we continue to invest and upskill our frontline staff, so that they can perform their roles effectively to support you in the right manner.

AP2s in training



AFB Recognition Trainers 'Train the Trainer' Day



This was a great opportunity for me to get to know our Trainers and AP2s better, as they are an extension of the Management Agency team. More details about the training days can be found in the Operations Managers and Training Coordinators sections of this newsletter.

Economic hardship and downstream impacts

I have spoken to several beekeepers who have explained their hardships to me; some have talked about walking away. If you are thinking about exiting the industry, **please don't walk away** from your apiaries and leave it for the Management Agency to tidy up your abandoned beekeeping operation. Our AP2 pool is small, our funding for apiary inspections is limited, and we have wide geographic regions to cover. I encourage you to have a plan, reach out to your peers, find someone to take over your operation, and contact us to update your records.

A new approach

A reduced levy income has impacts on our operations and requires tighter controls on expenditure and re-prioritisation towards areas that will yield greater success. I am a big believer of small wins. Over the course of the year, the Management Agency will be focussing on AFB elimination at regional and district levels through a traffic light system.

Our aim is to create 'green zones' (areas where AFB levels are near zero). Green zones cannot be created without the involvement of beekeepers. **Please reach out to us with your suggestions on how we can help your city/district/region move towards orange and green.** My Operations Managers and AP2s will be contacting some of you to schedule surveillance inspections for verification of AFB levels in your area.

2025/26 levy year consultation

Last week, we opened consultation with the sector for the proposed 2025/26 levies to **remain the same** at \$40 per beekeeper and \$1.95 per colony. Beekeepers can share their views with us by either completing the online submission form or posting a submission form (with any additional information) to our postal address. The consultation period will close at 5pm on Sunday 6 October 2024. Thank you to those beekeepers who have already made an early submission.

Please visit our website for more information: [Levy Consultation | The Management Agency, National](#)



[American Foulbrood Pest Management Plan New Zealand \(afb.org.nz\)](#)

The 2023/24 financial audits were completed at the end of August, and these are available for all beekeepers

to view: <https://afb.org.nz/audited-accounts/>

While September marks the start of spring, on a personal note, September marks my one-year anniversary of being in this organisation. It was an apt moment to reflect on the new direction the Management Agency is on. I would like to thank those of you I have had the opportunity to meet and speak with over the past year. Your knowledge, passion, and experience are valuable in gauging areas of improvement and areas where we are doing well. A special thanks goes to the Management Agency Board and the team of Apiary Coordinators, Training Coordinator/Administrator, Operations Managers, AFB Recognition Course trainers, and AP2s for their ongoing passion to help the sector with AFB elimination.

As always, thank you for your ongoing support for the work our team does each day and for your commitment to the AFB NPMP.

Niharika (Niha) Long
General Manager

National Operations Managers Dwayne Hill and Marco Gonzalez

How we allocate inspections

We are often asked as to why one beekeeper's apiary would be inspected following an AFB notification and others are not.

AFB Delimiting Surveillance

One of the Surveillance inspections we do is AFB delimiting surveillance. These are created in response to a report of AFB of unknown origin. The inspections identify beekeepers who are not managing AFB in their hives adequately and are posing a risk to their neighbouring beekeepers. It also provides an AFB inspection field training opportunity for beekeepers with apiaries in the immediate vicinity of a recent AFB finding.

How we do this

- We check the report and internal data to see if we are aware of the source of AFB. AFB delimiting surveillance is done when we suspect AFB has spread horizontally, we want to find the source of the AFB spread, and how far the AFB has spread from this location.
- When a case of AFB of unknown origin is reported to us, an Operations Manager will contact you to discuss the AFB finding.
- He will ask you if you know any apiaries from other beekeepers around your affected apiary. This is to verify that all the apiaries we see on HiveHub matches the sites that are actually present in the area.
- We then allocate inspections of the closest registered apiaries, (usually within 500m of the AFB report). This is because AFB spreads horizontally only to the nearest apiary/s .
- If the source or another case of AFB is found within a nearby apiary, the circle shifts to position itself on the new source of AFB and the surveillance works outwards from that point of find.
- If an unregistered apiary is identified, this apiary is allocated for inspection too.



De-registered and unregistered apiaries

If the source of the AFB is not found by inspecting the registered apiaries, the next step is to visit apiaries deregistered recently.

Often the reason why surveillance fails to find that source of an AFB outbreak is because the source is an unregistered apiary. You will be surprised on how often the beekeeper who reported AFB is also the one who identifies the source of his/her AFB case in a nearby unregistered apiary.

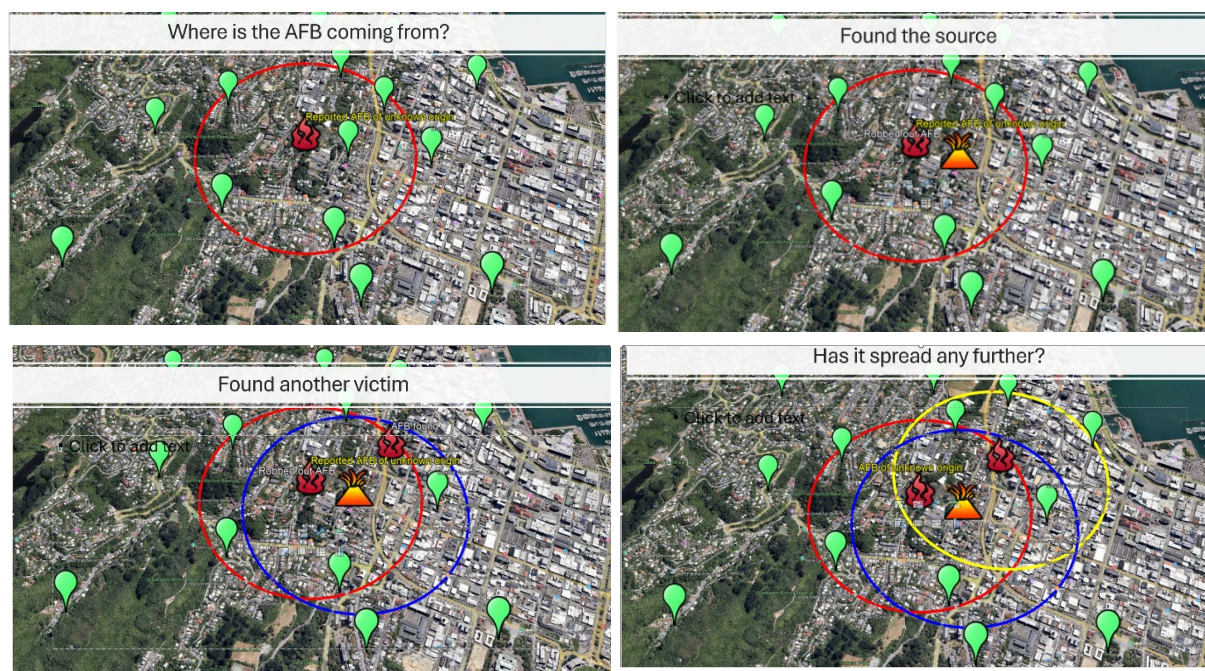
If a source can be found, this can be due to unregistered apiaries in the vicinity which does not show on our HiveHub maps. Therefore, it is crucial beekeepers notify us (using the 'Report Non-Compliance' button on HiveHub) of any apiary that may be unregistered. We will always check and let you know if it is a registered site.

Below are some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) we receive occasionally.

- 1: "How does the Management Agency define a neglected apiary?"
- 2: "What does the Management Agency do when it comes across a neglected apiary?"
- 3: "Other countries use vaccines and antibiotics for AFB. Why can't we do the same here in New Zealand?"
- 4: "During my walk, I have come across hives that look like they haven't been tended to for a while. Does the Management Agency have a way of determining if it belongs to anyone?"
- 5: What are the reasons an Authorised Person (AP2) would want to inspect my apiaries?
- 6: Does the Management Agency always use compliance actions on all beekeepers?

For answers to these questions, [CLICK HERE](#).

Graphical demonstration on how delimiting surveillance is done. Note: AFB report and apiary locations on the map are not real.



Area Freedom Surveillance.

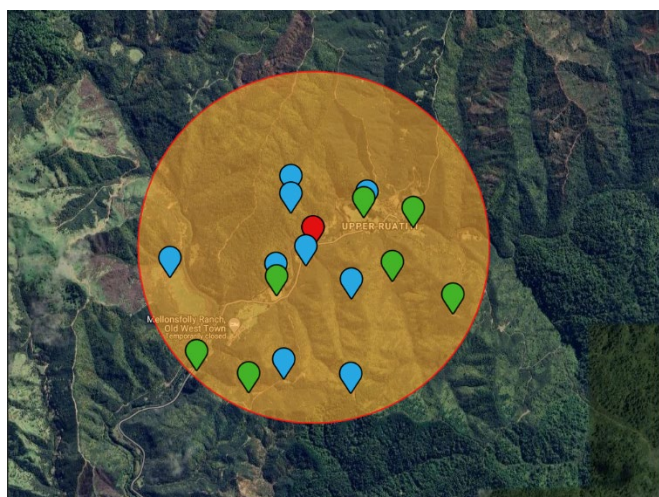
This surveillance is intended to confirm successful AFB elimination from an area known to have AFB cases in the recent past.

Beekeeper's AFB risk assessment surveillance.

This is the process we follow to identify high-risk beekeepers (beekeepers with >10% incidence of AFB in their colonies).

Whenever we identify three or more AFB cases of AFB in a single apiary, this suggests that AFB is not being managed within that beekeeping operation. To verify this, we allocate more apiaries that belongs to the same beekeeper until we have enough evidence to determine the level of AFB risk that beekeeper poses to other neighbouring beekeepers.

Map of how the AFB notification comes to Operations Managers. The circle is only 1 km in size, the RED pin being the AFB location, green pins being registered apiaries, and blue pins being previously deregistered. All registered apiaries will receive a TXT and email notifying them of an AFB being found nearby.



What to expect from our AP2s

Outside of friendliness, value, and education, our AP2s:

- must give 48 hours' notice to the beekeepers that they intend to inspect. (AP2s can only phone or txt, on the numbers you have provided).
- must sterilize hive tools and equipment, prior to leaving the apiary.
- must leave an advice of visit notice at each inspection.

What we expect from beekeepers during inspections:

- Cooperate with AP2 and help, if you are present.
- Make sure landowners are informed about the AP2 visit.
- Do not interfere with the hives once the AP2 has informed you that the inspection has been arranged.

When would AP2s come to inspect your apiaries?

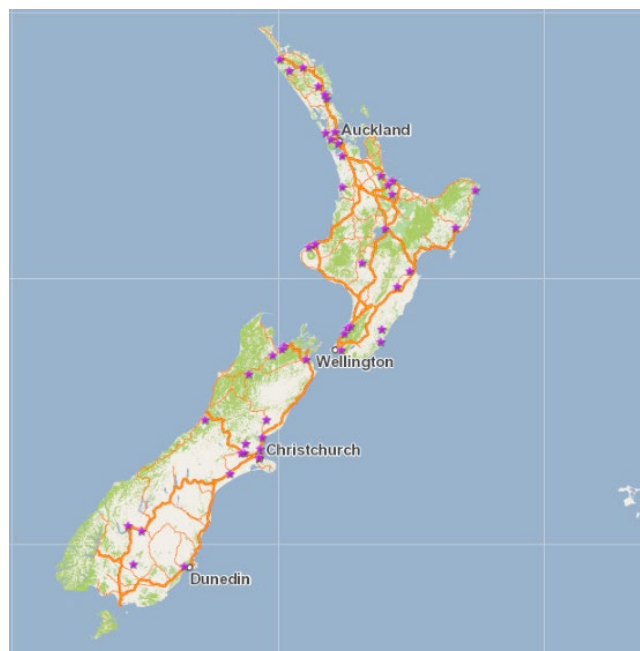
- When AFB was reported in the immediate vicinity of your apiary.
- When we find three or more AFB cases of AFB in one of your apiaries.
- When incidences of AFB are increasing within your operation and we suspect this is due to AFB mismanagement.
- When we received a report of a potential breach to the AFB NPMP.
- When you had AFB in your apiary within the last three years and we want to confirm that AFB has been successfully eliminated.

Open maps for beekeepers

This map was updated on June 1 with all the AFB from the 2023-24 season, and it will be updated every 4 months. [How to use this map](#)

- View AFB via heat map. Use this data to make decisions on hive locations or inspection urgency.
- Stars represent areas where our AP2s are based.
- View the northern vs southern region split (based on colony numbers)

[CLICK HERE FOR MAP](#)



Completing COIs as a DECA holder

As a DECA holder you may be asked to complete a COI for another non-DECA beekeeper, as per their clause 32 ('Certificate of Inspection') obligations under the AFB NPMP. This is an important role to perform as it helps to find and eliminate AFB in hives belonging to beekeepers who may not be able to find it.

There are some questions you need to ask before completing these inspections

Should I complete a COI for another beekeeper?

Yes – As long as you are confident in finding AFB and informing another beekeeper of the AFB.

No – If you are not confident finding AFB or would feel uncomfortable informing others of AFB.

When to complete these inspections?

Inspections need to be completed, prior to December 1st, so that the beekeeper can get the paperwork into the agency on time.

How to complete these inspections?

The beekeeper can either provide you with the paperwork or electronically allocate their apiaries to you. You must complete the paperwork as soon as possible.

Please [CLICK HERE](#) to see an instructional video on how to complete the COI electronically.

Annual AP2 Refresher trainings

Another successful joint MPI, AQ and AFB NPMP Management Agency Authorised Persons 2-day refresher training was completed in July 2024 at Christchurch.

Topics covered during the training:

- **AFB and the law:** This included the Biosecurity Act, the Privacy Act, The Bill of Rights and conflict of interests.
- **AFB inspections:** This included AFB inspection protocol, health and safety requirements and de-escalation techniques when dealing with uncooperative beekeepers and landowners.
- **Recent AFB Compliance and Enforcement Actions:** This covered a list of compliance and enforcement actions competed throughout the country in the last 12 months.
- **Non compliances and complaints:** An outline of all complaints received in the last 12 months, including what corrective and preventative measures have been put in place.
- **MPI and AsureQuality** covered field identification of exotic pests and diseases for honeybees, how to use the MPI Pests and Disease Hotline, and a list of recently completed investigations in response to reports of potential exotic pests and diseases of honey bees.
- **Dnature Laboratory Ltd** presented about qPCR testing, sampling protocols, interpreting test results, and its different potential applications as an additional tool to help beekeepers eliminate AFB from their beekeeping operation.



Training the new AP2 team at the Rolleston office

AP2 recruitment

We recruited 10 new AP2s this winter, covering the Northland, Waikato, Hawkes Bay, Wairarapa, Wellington, Nelson and Canterbury regions.

The new AP2s completed their AP2 classroom induction training on 15 August at the Rolleston office. They are currently inspecting apiaries with other experienced AP2s, as part of their field induction training and it is expected that they will start completing inspections on their own from October onwards.

These new group of AP2s have improved our geographic coverage and allowed for spare capacity in areas where we previously had only one AP2.

There are still areas of the country where AP2 presence is required such as the Far North, Waikato, Whanganui, and the Coromandel. If you are interested in becoming an AP2 for those regions, please contact Dwayne Hill.



The Management Agency's AP2s (and AP1s)

Number of AP2s per region

Region	# of AP2s	Names of AP2s
Northland	6	Dion Oleary, Cade Maxwell, Maru Hoani, Jo Scott, Tania Underwood, and Jonny Long
Auckland	4	Ken Brown, Vicki Allen, Kim Kneijber, and Cheng Zeng.
Waikato	2	Lott Larson and Karena Robinson
BOP	4	Mark Silson, John Fransen, Jason O'Callaghan, and Judy Knipmeijer
Taranaki	2	Francis Profitt and George White
Manawatu/ Wanganui	2	Phill Cowan and Mykola Freshchenko
Gisborne	2	Mark Iles and Tau Henare
Hawkes Bay	3	Tom Taylor, Shaun Bentley, and Gareth Moyle
Wairarapa	2	John Swinney and Nikita Mudford
Greater Wellington	4	Phil Cowan, Mykola Freshchenko, Stewart Turner, and Mark Grenfell
Nelson Tasman	3	Norbert Klose, Daniel Levy, and Andrew Lane
Marlborough	1	Tomas Mercau
West Coast	2	Jason McDonald and Bruce Wardle
Canterbury	9	Lindsay Moir, Graeme Narbey, Mark Lawrence, Glynn Cleaver, Justine Narbey, Rae Buttler, Meg Middleton, Simon Phillips and John McNamara
Otago	3	Murray Rixon, Sharleen Coker, and Dan Childs
Southland	1	Nick Watkins

AFB photos and Refresher training staying familiar

Spring is the best time to refresh yourself with what AFB looks like.

To do this you can head to our website or view the gallery in the link below. Please contact Janette (training@afb.org.nz) to enquire about AFB Recognition refresher training.

[AFB Photo Gallery – CLICK HERE](#)

DECA template consultation

You may be aware that we are looking at the current DECA template; in doing so we have made some changes but are also interested in what our Current DECA holders believe needs improving.

We will be sending an invite to all current commercial DECA holders to gain feedback on this in due time.

Break the AFB cycle within your own beekeeping operation.

Every year some beekeepers create more AFB cases by inoculating AFB in their hives when re-using AFB contaminated gear. Below are a few helpful tips to help break the cycle.

Find all the AFB present in your hives before you add supers on.

If you complete at least a couple of thorough AFB inspections in the spring you are likely to identify all the AFB that came to you from the neighbourhood from your bees robbing AFB robbed-out hives in the winter. This will also reduce the amount of gear that you will be burning.



While we understand that you cannot speed up the incubation period of AFB, the reality is that the earlier in the season you find all your AFB cases, the lower the cost of these findings. This way, you have a higher chance of eliminating AFB from that apiary quickly.

Remember, the more AFB you find in the spring should equal to a much lower number of AFB cases to be found in the Autumn, if any.

Dead Out Management

A common source of this AFB contaminated gear are dead out hives that died due to PMS, but they also have AFB.

Dead out hives must be treated as potentially contaminated with AFB. Always complete a thorough AFB inspection before deciding to re-use dead out hives.

Repopulate dead outs as a unit, so that instead of creating multiple cases of AFB you would only create one.

Honey Super Management

We cannot stress this enough: **Please inspect your hives before you harvest honey.** This will ensure you don't create multiple AFB contaminated honey boxes after extraction.

Hobbyists should trace honey supers to individual hives and commercial beekeeper should be able to trace them back to apiary sites.

If you find a case of AFB after harvesting honey, we recommend you go to your shed, identify the associated honey supers, and deal with them at the same time you are burning the infected hive.

Training Coordinator Janette Gwilliam



Janette running in a local trail event

Spring is here!

If you don't currently hold a DECA, you'll need to arrange for a DECA holder to inspect your hives between 1 August and 31 November, to sign off on your Certificate of Inspection (COI).

If you are [ELIGIBLE](#) and considering getting a DECA, you'll need to complete an AFB Recognition Course, and as we are now in September, we only have a limited number of classroom courses left for the year. They are being held in: Orewa 21 Sept, Gisborne 28 Sept, New Plymouth 5 Oct, Dunedin 12 Oct, Manurewa 12 Oct, Christchurch 19 Oct, Northcote 19 Oct, Hastings 19 Oct & Nelson 20 Oct. [CLICK HERE](#) to find out more information on these classroom courses.

Or if these dates and locations don't suit you, or maybe you just prefer learning at home at your own pace, our online course details are [HERE](#).

Already a DECA holder? Join any of the full classroom course as a refresher, you can leave when the other beekeepers begin the test. Alternatively, we have our free online refresher course – just click [HERE](#).

Please contact Janette if you have any queries regarding the training courses. Phone 0800 232 767, or email training@afb.org.nz

[CLICK HERE](#) for responses to **frequently asked questions about AFB Recognition Courses.**

Train the Trainers Day

In July, the Management Agency's AFB Recognition Trainers gathered for a one-day training session. This 'Train the Trainer' Day provided a valuable opportunity for our trainers to re-calibrate through topics such as learning styles of the students, identifying and overcoming barriers to classroom attendance, refining teaching techniques, and strategies for promoting education and awareness about AFB. These elements are so important as our trainers are often the first point of contact with the Management Agency for many beekeepers.

Our AFB Recognition Trainers are dedicated beekeepers who play an important role in laying a strong foundation for other beekeepers as they embark on their AFB elimination journey. Their commitment ensures that the training provided is both current and relevant, helping beekeepers effectively manage and eliminate AFB.

By keeping our training knowledge up to date, the Management Agency continues to add value to the beekeeping community and support the sector's ongoing efforts to eliminate AFB.



Head Trainer, Brice Horner, presenting to the group

Apiary Coordinators Tracey Gonzalez & Paula Rich

Tracey Gonzalez

Certificate of Inspection time

If you are not a DECA holder please ensure you organise a DECA holder early and don't leave it till the end of November.



Below is a link to a list of approved beekeepers willing to assist with COI inspections, this is available via the AFB PMP website and updated weekly:

[CLICK HERE](#)

This is not a complete list of approved beekeepers but rather those who are willing to share their contact details. All approved beekeepers that have held their DECA for more than 12 months are allowed to undertake COI inspections, regardless of whether or not they are on the list. Please note that the inspecting beekeeper may charge for this service.

We are here to help: if you have any questions or need assistance, please email us:

apiary@afb.org.nz and we will respond back to you via email, or phone us during office hours Monday-Friday 8am-4pm.

Thanks,
Tracey

Paula Rich

New Beekeeper Registration



Spring is finally here and with that we have a steady influx of new beekeepers. If you have not been registered before and are considering becoming a beekeeper please ensure that you have your hive(s) set up on your apiary site(s) before you make your application to register as a beekeeper. You do not have to be a registered beekeeper while you do a beekeeping course or for purchasing hives or equipment. Only when you have your own hive(s) set up on your apiary site(s) must you be registered as a beekeeper.

Registration entails notification to the Management Agency of your new apiary site(s) within 30 days of setting up your hive(s). Once we have processed your application, the Beekeeper registration number we are required to notify you of must be clearly marked on your beehives or apiary site with within 30 days of you receiving it.

We are often replying to prospective beekeepers to remind them to put apiary details in, only to have them reply that they do not have their hive yet, and we must respond accordingly. This impacts on the time we need to spend on other administrative tasks we are required to do for all levy paying beekeepers. It is our hope to minimise such impacts over the busy spring and summer ahead.

We hope you enjoy spring with your bees.



Key Reminders

Certificate of Inspection

With your COI due by the end of November, please remember to speak to DECA holders early to arrange your inspections. Contact us on 0800 232 767 or apiary@afb.org.nz if you need help with requesting an inspection via HiveHub or how to download paper copies of your COI forms.

[CLICK HERE](#) for a breakdown of the COI process and **COI frequently asked questions**.

Storing Dead out equipment

Any gear returning to the sheds should be checked for disease. You should have a clear idea of why the colony died.

This equipment should be marked in a way it can be traced back to an apiary, where each group of gear should be separated on pallets or by wrapping in plastic.

Key upcoming dates for 2024 and beekeeper legal obligations

Description	Start Date	Due Date
COIs are generated in HiveHub	1 st Week of August 2024	30 th November 2024
Submit your completed COI on time	1 st August 2024	30 th November 2024



Want us to write about a particular topic? Please get in touch on info@afb.org.nz with any topics or ideas you would find helpful and would like us to cover.