

Bee brief

Essential AFB updates for all beekeepers.



Issue 5 (December 2024)

Update from the General Manager

Welcome to the final quarterly newsletter for 2024. Since its introduction a year ago, The Management Agency has noticed a steady increase in the uptake of our newsletter during the year, which was also reflected in the positive feedback received when speaking to beekeepers. In addition to our other communication channels, my team and I will continue to use this platform to share essential information and updates with all beekeepers in the coming year.



Every voice matters

The key reflection that stands out for The Management Agency this year is our ongoing journey of building and – in some cases – rebuilding working relationships with beekeepers. We recognise the need for beekeepers' voices to be heard. Accordingly, we amended our format for the 2025/26 levy rate consultation, to provide beekeepers the opportunity to assess The Agency's performance over the past year and identify areas of improvement or ideas for the future.

The survey was sent to over 8,100 registered beekeepers, yet only 1.1% of all beekeepers responded. Most beekeepers were hobbyists

owning less than 10 colonies and feedback from larger commercial operators was sorely lacking. The feedback received was helpful for me to assess which areas beekeepers would like us to focus on.

Every beekeeper's voice matters, regardless of whether you are a hobbyist, a commercial, in the city, or in rural areas. Given engagement is a two-way street, we encourage **all** beekeepers to use our communication channels in the new year to have their voices heard.

Updates to the AFB NPMP Change Programme

Development of the AFB Refresher course for commercial beekeeping operations is nearing completion, in the form of a series of nine lessons on the Bracken Platform (the platform that also hosts the online AFB Recognition Courses).

The course modules are supported by videos, still imagery, and quotes from commercial beekeepers on the importance of early action against AFB. I would like to acknowledge and extend my thanks to **Taylor Pass Honey, Lindis Honey, and Neil Andrews** for assisting our team with extra staff, yard space, hives & colonies, and other equipment that were crucial for filming certain sections of the course. The Management Agency Board has approved the lessons, and we will contact commercial beekeepers in the new year to discuss delivery of this course.

The Management Agency's website

The structure of The Management Agency's new website has been confirmed. The revised website is designed to support our role in the beekeeping sector by acting as an effective communication platform with strong brand presence. The new website will be a single source of truth for all registered beekeepers (new and veteran), where information on AFB elimination practices, statutory obligations, key events and dates, AFB Recognition training, and AFB metrics will be readily available. The new website is expected to go live on 31 March 2025.

Beekeeper engagement

Last week, Marco Gonzalez and I spoke at the Whakatipu Beekeepers club in Arrowtown. There were lots of great questions from those present, many of which focussed on holding non-compliant beekeepers to account who undermine the sector's collective efforts towards AFB elimination. We would like to thank Robyn Newman for organising the evening; if you live in the area and are not affiliated with the Whakatipu club yet, I advise you to contact Robyn Newman (whakatipubeekeepers@gmail.com) for signing up.



Ongoing challenges

Our Authorised Persons are continuing to find multiple cases of AFB across multiple apiaries. Many of these beekeepers had purchased gear from those who left the industry within the last two years. If you are thinking of buying second-hand gear this summer from a beekeeper exiting the industry, **please do your due diligence**. Over three-quarters of AFB cases arise from the gifting or purchasing of gear with unknown AFB status.

The rise in unregistered apiaries is also concerning to us; over 90% of these belong to registered beekeepers. Please note that keeping unregistered apiaries is a breach of the AFB NPMP and puts neighbouring beekeepers at risk.

Our AP2s have also faced several verbal abuse and threats over the past few months during surveillance inspections. Threats such as "letting dogs loose" on our AP2s and other hate speech regularly gets reported to me. It is disappointing that a minority of beekeepers consider our AP2s as threats, instead of welcoming their visits as a learning opportunity. On the bright side, thank you to the many beekeepers who send in their positive feedback about AP2s, following an inspection.

I commend those of you who are continuing to be diligent, committed, and dedicated towards reducing AFB incidence in your operations towards achieving elimination. Thank you for your ongoing support of the AFB NPMP.

I wish you and your family a joyful festive season and we look forward to continuing to support you in your fight against AFB next year.

Niharika (Niha) Long
General Manager

Key Reminders

AFB checks and honey harvests

Please remember to check for AFB, prior to removing honey from your hives. Contaminated honey supers are one of the pathways for AFB spread and is almost invisible without clear tracing procedures. DECA holders are advised to check Clauses (2.2 – 2.4) which states that you are to check, prior to removing items from a hive.

What to do if AFB has been found in a hive during honey harvest

If you have found AFB in your hives, unsure about how to manage AFB within your hives or what to do once you have found AFB, please refer to: afb.org.nz/i-think-i-have-afb/
afb.org.nz/dos-and-donts-of-afb-control/

Stop feeding honey to your bees and feed them sugar syrup instead.

Extracting honey from your quarantine apiaries is an important tool for removing potentially AFB contaminated honey from hives before these are fed to bees and produce another AFB infection.

Key upcoming dates for 2025 and beekeeper legal obligations

Obligation	Start Date	Due Date
Default COI inspections		Begin Autumn 2025
Annual Disease Returns	1 April 2025	1 June 2025
Levy invoices generated using your colony information as at 31 March 2025	1 April 2025 – invoices are available in HiveHub	Payment is due by 1 June 2025

Fire Ban Recommendations during the summer

If you need to burn an AFB infected hive in the summer but your area has a complete fire ban, we recommend you check the fire permit status for your area at www.checkitsalright.nz and request a fire permit. You may like to approach your local fire station for advice also.



The Management Agency Christmas – New Year Hours

The Management Agency's office will be closed from midday Friday 20 December 2024 and will reopen at 8:00am on Monday 6 January 2025.

If any urgent AFB issues arise during this period, please call **0800 AFB PMP (0800 232 767)** and leave a voice message for us to contact you.

Inspector (AP2) Contracts Available

- Do you have experience recognising American foulbrood (AFB) in the field?
- Do you have a history of compliance with National American Foulbrood Pest Management Plan (NPMP) rules?
- Have you held a DECA for at least two years?
- Do you want to help fellow beekeepers to eliminate AFB?

If you answered 'yes' to all three questions and you'd like to be part of the professional team that monitors compliance with NPMP rules and assists the Management Agency with enforcement actions in your region, this could be your opportunity to contribute to AFB elimination in New Zealand. Click [HERE](#) for further information.

National Operations Managers Dwayne Hill and Marco Gonzalez

Hive Sales – dos & don'ts

We are finding that more and more hives and nucs are being sold, here is a list of dos and don'ts when selling or purchasing hives.

DO	DON'T
Log all sales and purchases in HiveHub (including hives received or given as gifts).	File an ADR without hives sales or purchases that were made.
Check the hive for AFB prior to sale or purchase.	Take ownership of a hive you haven't had checked for AFB
Make sure the person you sell to or are buying from is registered.	Allow unregistered beekeepers to go unnoticed.
Have a 6 month right of return	Delete the seller's details.

We recently have had multiple cases of AFB coming from hives which were purchased from an organisation, who don't directly own the hives.

This activity puts the industry at risk. We recommend buying hives local and viewing the hive at the apiary, prior to purchasing. If you are selling the hives ask to see the registration number of the beekeeper, if they are not yet registered, get them to do this prior to the sale going through.



Dwayne Hill & Marco Gonzalez

National Operations Managers

Beekeeper Statistics

Registered beekeepers = 8,234, apiaries = 51,106, registered colonies = 525,695.

AFB cases (1 June - 13 Dec 2024) = 1594 vs 1909 (1 June - 13 Dec 2023)

Open maps for beekeepers

This map was updated on December 1 with all the AFB from the 2023-24 season.

The link to the map will be updated on 6 January and will reflect all AFB found from the 2024-25 season.

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](#)



Training Coordinator – Janette Gwilliam

We have come to the end of another calendar year for AFB Recognition Courses. This year has presented less registrations and classroom courses due to the end of the “free fees” training scheme. We've seen a noticeable decline in the number of students requiring our AFB Recognition Course as part of their Level 3 Apiculture curriculum.



Training Statistics – 2023 v 2024

January 2023 to December 2023		January 2024 – 30 November 2024	
<u>Classroom courses</u>	51	<u>Classroom courses</u>	27
Beekeepers Attended	652	Beekeepers Attended	295
<u>Refresher courses</u>	6	<u>Refresher courses</u>	5
Beekeepers Attended	55	Beekeepers Attended	71
Online full course (to year-end)	204	Online full course	98
Online refresher (to year-end)	190	Online refresher	140

2025 Training Calendar

The training calendar dates and locations for 2025 are now underway. Despite this year's lower participation numbers, we plan to maintain a similar format of dates and locations for 2025. This approach allows a range of courses across the country while also giving the trainers a break between courses. New courses can always be added to the calendar throughout the year to meet any requests for extra courses. Our in-person classroom training calendar can be found [HERE](#).

If you want to complete the **ONLINE** AFB Recognition Course or free AFB Recognition Refresher course over the holidays, further information can be found [HERE](#).

As always, please discuss any of your AFB Recognition Training needs with me via training@afb.org.nz or phone 0800 232 767.

Commercial Training Filming Day

As part of the commercial training material currently being developed, on 25 October, we had a day in Alexandra, Central Otago filming some content for the course material. We teamed up with some Taylor Pass Employees and under the direction of Brice Horner, our lead trainer, we had a very successful day capturing employees working the hives, checking frames for disease and taking swab tests (among other things). There were videos taken, close up photography and also drone footage. We timed it well with the weather as the following day there was snow at the apiary site!



Dwayne & Kenzie (from Taylor Pass) working a hive

Apiary Coordinators - Tracey Gonzalez, & Paula Rich

Greetings busy beekeepers,

Thank you for all your hard work throughout the year. Some of you have had issues with your Certificates of Inspection (COI), and we thank those of you who have contacted us and made the effort to get them completed properly. If you are unsure whether your COI has been completed properly and processed, please log into your Hivehub account to check. While we are now past the inspection period, we are keen to get as many COIs completed as possible so that our Operations Managers have the best possible understanding of what is going on out there with all our bees.

We wish you all a safe and relaxing Christmas and best wishes for the New Year.

Kind regards
Tracey & Paula



Tracey Gonzalez & Paula Michelle Rich

Apiary Coordinators



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.

Miramar Beekeepers – volunteers are required for free AFB swabbing

Researchers at Victoria University of Wellington are conducting a survey of disease and especially AFB in beehives in Miramar. They would like to contact as many beekeepers in Miramar as possible to take swabs using the Foster Method.

The Foster Method is named after industry stalwart Barry Foster and has been developed by DNature Ltd. It involves a simple swab of hive entrances to obtain samples that are then tested for AFB. This method is a newly developed tool in the beekeepers' toolkit for maintaining a healthy beehive. It can detect AFB before the hive is visually symptomatic.

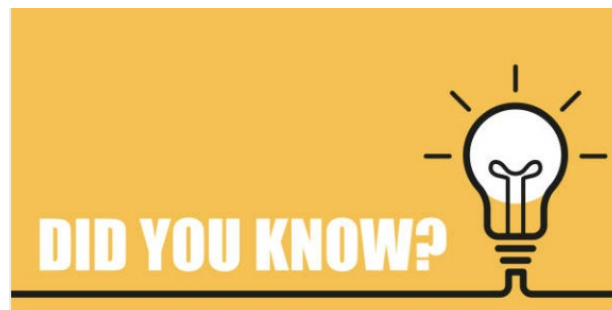
The team at Victoria University will sample Miramar hives free of charge. We will then inform beekeepers of the outcome of these tests after analysis. The information will be used as part of a disease survey and a Masters of Science thesis at the university. If any hives are found to be positive for AFB, the beekeeper will be advised as such and they will be required to report to The Management Agency within 7 days, as per the AFB National Pest Management Plan.

If you have hives in Miramar that you'd like to be tested, please contact Tim Lunt at Tim.Lunt@vuw.ac.nz or by phone at 021 089 809 30 (text or call).

Additionally, if you know of any hive owners that this message may not reach then we kindly ask you to forward this message to them. Only AFB tests will be performed, no license or registration checks are part of this research, and any information collected information will remain confidential and anonymized



Number of AP2s (Authorised Persons) 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 Mercu
West Coast	2	Jason McDonald and Bruce Wardle
Canterbury	7	Lindsay Moir, Graeme Narbey, Mark Lawrence, Glynn Cleaver, Justine Narbey, Rae Buttler, and Meg Middleton
Otago	2	Sharleen Coker and Dan Childs
Southland	1	Nick Watkins