

Bee brief

Essential AFB updates for all beekeepers.



Issue 6 (March 2025)

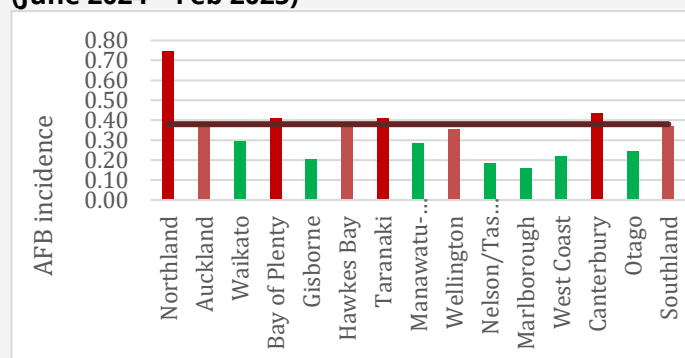
Update from the General Manager

I would like to start this edition of our newsletter on a positive note.

I am pleased to report that as of this week, there has been a 17.5% **decline** in the reported number of AFB cases, when compared to the same period last year. The resulting year-to-date AFB prevalence has declined from 0.42 in 2024 to 0.38 this year (Table 1).

Congratulations to all of you for this fantastic achievement! Your diligence, commitment, and efforts to continue practicing good AFB management protocols, staying on top of inspections, identification, reporting, and destroying AFB-infected hives and associated gear has led to this result. I recommend you give yourself a wee pat on the back and continue keeping up the great work!

Regional breakdown of AFB incidence (June 2024 – Feb 2025)



When applying a traffic-light system on the regional breakdown of AFB incidence (Figure 1), as of 28 February 2025:

- Eight (8) regions were in the **green** (below the national AFB incidence level),
- Four (4) regions were in the **orange** (close to the national AFB incidence level),
- Four (4) regions were in the **red** (exceeding the national AFB incidence level).



Red: The high AFB incidence levels in Northland, Bay of Plenty, Taranaki, and Canterbury have come from less than three high-risk beekeepers in each region who have contributed to this increase and from AFB cases in urban areas.

My Operations Managers and field Authorised Persons have undertaken extensive delimiting surveillance in neighbouring apiaries around these high-risk beekeepers, to determine the extent of AFB-spread and to ensure other compliant beekeepers remain AFB-free. We will continue working with all affected beekeepers in these three regions, through education and guidance, to bring their AFB cases down over the next 12 months.

Note: at the district level, there are areas of **green** within a **red** region where beekeepers are AFB-free.

Orange: These regions are close to the national AFB incidence level, and we advise beekeepers in these regions to be cautious, to ensure they stay on top of their AFB management procedures, do extensive due diligence when purchasing second-hand beekeeping gear, and promptly report & destroy AFB cases within 7 days. Please reach out to my Operations Managers if you require further guidance.

Green: Beekeepers in these eight regions are doing an excellent job with their AFB efforts and we recommend that you prevent complacency by doing the basics well, keeping your AFB identification skills sharp by attending [AFB Recognition and Refresher courses](#), reporting and destroying AFB cases promptly.

There are still few months left in the reporting year. We expect some rise in cases over autumn, as hives return from pollination back to home apiaries. Pollination period remains a challenge for The Management Agency. Hive movements = increased spread of AFB.

We are also aware that beekeepers in some areas are potentially under-reporting, or worse, not reporting cases to us at all. Finding, reporting and destroying AFB cases is a statutory obligation for all beekeepers. Some beekeepers hide their AFB problems for fear of how they would be perceived by their peers. AFB does not like to remain hidden and in time, will move to other parts of the beekeeper's operation and spread to neighbouring beekeepers. This also comes at the cost to all levy payers, who must foot the bill for the non-compliance of a handful of beekeepers.

It is crucial that we work as a team to remove AFB stigma from our industry. **Please support your peers;** everyone's AFB journey will look different. Those who regularly find, report, destroy AFB cases and are proactive in their management practices for eliminating further disease spread are champions.

Updates to the AFB NPMP Change Programme

Commercial beekeepers' AFB refresher training

Commercial beekeeping operations have different challenges to non-commercial beekeepers. The Management Agency's commercial beekeepers' AFB refresher training provides a holistic approach to integrating AFB elimination within business-as-usual practices. Whether you are a one-person business operation or a large beekeeping operation with several employees, there is something for everyone within this course (including those in management).



Training delivery

With the course now almost ready for launch during winter 2025, The Management Agency is focussed on ensuring delivery of this training happens at the right time and caters to the learning outcomes of both fulltime and seasonal employees.

Last week, all commercial beekeepers with over 300 colonies would have received an invitation to complete a simple survey. Completing this survey is **strongly recommended**. Your responses would allow us to use levy funds wisely for:

- scheduling a timetable of courses in regions with the greatest demand,
- confirming trainer availability and travel, and
- ensuring we meet the learning outcomes of those wishing to register and attend.

[CLICK HERE](#) to check out the video that outlines the course content

The Management Agency's new website

The Management Agency team have worked hard to ensure the new website is user-friendly, has information that is relevant, understandable, and actionable for all beekeepers. We will notify all beekeepers once the new website has gone live. We are open to your feedback on info@afb.org.nz.

Comms and engagement

In February 2025, Dwayne Hill and I were warmly welcomed by Comvita Whanganui to spend a day and a half with their team, visiting apiaries, and gaining an understanding of their proactive planning of AFB elimination.

This week, Dwayne Hill is in Waikato to speak with commercial and non-commercial beekeepers. Our visits are often about a casual chat, to listen about anything you are finding challenging or any suggestions you have got for us, and to share tips/pointers. We have couple of other visits planned during the year and would like to continue holding in-person engagements, wherever we can and within the limits of the budget.

Seeds of doubt and uncertainty

Events over the past few weeks have created ripples of uncertainty across the beekeeping industry and have raised many questions of "where to next?".

I would like to assure you that our organisation will be here for all beekeepers and will continue to support the industry towards a future state of resilience and success; through collaboration, learning, innovation, unity, knowledge-sharing, and by simply doing the basics well.

Thank you for your efforts, your passion, and your ongoing support of The Management Agency team.

Niharika (Niha) Long
General Manager



Upcoming dates for 2025 & beekeeper legal obligations

Obligation	Start Date	Due Date
To ensure the accuracy of your levy invoice, your colony information should be up to date	Now	31 March 2025
Annual Disease Returns are generated in HiveHub	1 April 2025	1 June 2025
AFB levy invoices are generated in HiveHub	1 April 2025	1 June 2025

Statistics – as at March 2025

Category	2024/25	2023/25
Number of registered beekeepers	8,364 (7.8%)	9,074
Number of registered apiaries	51,508 (6.3%)	54,989
Number of registered colonies	539,786 (7.6%)	584,527
AFB cases	2,048 (17.5%)	2,483
AFB incidence	0.38	0.42

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.



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.

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 have answered 'yes' to all four questions and you'd like to be part of the professional team that monitors compliance with NPMP rules and assists The Management Agency with eliminating AFB 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

Traceability can protect you from the spread of AFB

Effective traceability can help mitigate the risk of AFB in several ways:

1. **Monitoring and Early Detection:** With traceability systems in place, beekeepers can detect signs of infection early. By recording hive conditions, inspections, and any treatments applied, it's easier to spot unusual patterns that may indicate an AFB outbreak. Early detection allows for quicker intervention.
2. **Source Identification:** Traceability ensures that the origin of equipment, bees, and other resources can be traced. If an outbreak occurs. This helps prevent further contamination of other hives or apiaries and allows beekeepers to take corrective actions.
3. **Recording Hive and equipment Movements:** traceability is useful when hives or equipment are moved from one location to another. This is important because the transport of infected colonies or equipment can spread AFB to new areas.
4. **Biosecurity and Best Practices:** Traceability systems can be used to enforce organisational biosecurity protocols, ensuring that staff follow guidelines that prevent the introduction and spread of AFB. This includes managing movement between apiaries, and ensuring that only healthy, disease-free colonies are introduced.

Done correctly, traceability helps create a structured and transparent framework in your operation for monitoring, preventing, and managing AFB outbreaks. By facilitating early detection, improving biosecurity, and promoting proper disease management, traceability can significantly reduce the risk of AFB transmission, protecting both individual beekeepers and the broader honeybee population.

Open maps for beekeepers

This map was updated on 28 February with all the AFB from the 2024-25 season, and it will be updated every 4 months.

How to use this map

- Use data in the heat map 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](#)



Keeping the information of your beekeeping up to date helps everyone in our goal to AFB elimination. All beekeepers are required to update their information in Hivehub at least once a year with their ADR.



Dwayne Hill & Marco Gonzalez
National Operations Managers

Report all your hives Sales & Purchases

[Clause 27 \(Annual Disease Return\)](#)

The ADR is a legal declaration that all beekeepers must file. This must include any transfer in ownership of beehives.

The definition of a beehive is part of the Biosecurity National American Foulbrood Pest Management Plan Order 1998 and states:

"Beehive means a thing constructed for the keeping of honey bees and that is or has being used for that purpose, but does not include an introduction cage or a mailing cage."

Under sales and purchases of the ADR, you must also declare any beehives that you gifted, gave away, etc. The purpose of this declaration is for AFB traceability and also applies if there was no money involved during transfer of ownership.

When declaring your hives sales and purchases you must include the following information:

- 1) The date on which the ownership of the beehives was transferred to or from the beekeeper, and in each case,
- 2) the number of beehives transferred
- 3) the name and address of the transferee and transferor.

Any sales or purchases records that you have recorded during the year will be already recorded under sales and purchases and wouldn't require to be entered again. However, if you transferred apiaries with hives to other beekeepers, these are not recorded automatically as beehives sales and purchases. You must ensure that you enter these sales and purchases in your ADR.

ADR submitted with missing sales and purchases information will be rejected, until the sales and purchases information is completed. If the beekeeper refuses to supply this required information, the ADR won't be accepted.

For tips on how to **update your apiary details:**
[CLICK HERE](#)

Remember to quarantine any second-hand gear of unknown health status. Even if the gear came from a reputable beekeeper.

A beekeeper in the Dannevirke area lost 100% of their hives after applying second-hand gear of unknown health status that was gifted to them. .

We advise that when beekeepers introduce second-hand gear of unknown health status, they should restrict the introduction of this gear to nominated quarantine apiaries for the first 12 months.

If AFB doesn't develop in any of these hives/apiaries within 12 months of the gear being used, then this verifies that the gear is safe to be used in the rest of the beekeeping operation.

Buy beehives locally.

We have seen AFB outbreaks in Southland and Otago that were created by beekeepers moving hives or second-hand gear contaminated with AFB from other parts of the country. This led to re-introduction of AFB to areas that were already AFB free.

Are you moving to a different region of the country and taking your hives with you?

In Southland, we had AFB reports that were traced back to second-hand gear that was purchased from Northland and beehives that were moved from Canterbury.

In Hawkes Bay we had a report of 20 cases of AFB traced to beehives purchased from the Auckland area.

In Otago we had AFB reports that were traced back to beehives that were moved from Canterbury and from the Westport area.

When you are moving your beekeeping operation from one region to another, remember to monitor your hives closely to ensure you are not bringing AFB to the region you are moving to. In the event AFB is present please find, report, and destroy it before it spreads to other beekeepers.

Training Coordinator – Janette Gwilliam

Attending an AFB Recognition course is essential for all beekeepers. Learn how to **recognise the early signs of AFB (American Foulbrood)** to ensure your hives stay healthy and free of AFB. Gain confidence in identifying AFB symptoms early to prevent its spread.

Even if you do not wish to become a DECA holder, all beekeepers are encouraged to attend an AFB Recognition course which will help to familiarise you with what is normal and what is not in your working hive. This ensures that the detection and recognition of AFB is caught early and eliminated, prior to spreading.

[CLICK HERE](#) to view **the AFB Recognition Course** promotional video!!

Cost: \$100.00 per person, incl GST
This cost includes a free copy of the “yellow book”, Elimination of American Foulbrood Disease without the Use of Drugs

Registration Link & Classroom Venues:

www.afb.org.nz

Contact:

Janette Gwilliam
Phone 0800 232767, ext 301 with any course questions or if you wish to register over the phone or email training@afb.org.nz

If you prefer the comfort of **online learning**, the online AFB Recognition Course is an excellent solution for those that are unable to make our in-person classroom-based courses due to location, convenience or accessibility.

The AFB Recognition Course is broken down into modules which means you can work through them at your own pace. You can complete it all in one go, or you may opt to slowly work through the modules over a period of time.

[Click here](#) for further details or contact [Janette](#) if you have any questions regarding AFB training.

Attention DECA Holders: Stay Up to Date with your AFB Recognition Skills!

As a DECA holder, it's essential to keep your AFB Recognition skills up to date. To support this, we're offering a **FREE online AFB Recognition course** to help you stay on top of your AFB Recognition. [CLICK HERE](#) to get started! Classroom refresher courses are also available, contact Janette to discuss further.

Commercial Refresher Course

We are close to launching our **Commercial Refresher Course** designed with all commercial operators in mind. Recognising AFB, preventing its spread, and understanding your legal obligations supports the elimination of AFB from managed hives.

We will be contacting commercial beekeepers in the coming months inviting them to register their staff for this commercial package. It is expected that employee beekeepers have already completed an AFB Recognition Course and a refresher course, before attending the commercial beekeepers' training.

[CLICK HERE](#) to view **the Commercial Refresher Course** promotional video!!



Apiary Coordinators

Tracey Gonzalez & Paula Rich

Greetings busy beekeepers!

It is that time of year to log into your Hivehub account and update your details, so you are levied correctly. From 1 April you will need to submit your Annual Disease Return and pay your levy invoice. These are **two separate things** and beekeepers can get them confused. Your levy invoice is the annual payment that you get invoiced for. The Annual Disease Return is a form you fill out to update any details and add any hive sales and purchases over the previous 12 months. Also please ensure all AFB has been recorded and that you have not missed reporting any to us. **This ADR form does not require an inspection.** Your levy invoice payment and ADR submission are both due between the 1st of April and 1st of June.

If you get a reminder about these, it is because we have not received a completed form or payment so, please don't ignore the reminders. No further reminders will be sent once your payment and/or ADR have been received, approved and processed.

Tracey Gonzalez



Tracey Gonzalez & Paula Michelle Rich

Apiary Coordinators

Hi everyone,

March is a good tidy up time for all beekeepers with the Levy and Annual Disease Return period starting on 1 April. If you haven't logged in for some time and can't remember your password, do reach out for assistance as we are here to help as many beekeepers as possible to check and update their information in a timely manner. While you are updating your colony numbers, for example, you could also tidy up any empty apiaries that you will not be using this year by deregistering them. (It is a simple process to reactivate them in future years if you decide to use them again. Keep careful record of MAF ID numbers for easy identification).

If you do not currently have any bees and do not intend to get any this year, please ensure you have removed all hive ware from your apiary site (blocked and stored away or destroyed if necessary), you need to complete and submit a [Deregistration Form](#). Once your form has been completed and submitted correctly, we can then process your deregistration. You can re-register as a beekeeper when you get bees again by simply contacting us with your registration number, any new apiary information and any updated contact details, so that we can reactivate your HiveHub account.

As always, feel free to contact us with any questions.

Have a great year!

Paula Rich