



Scottish Beekeepers' Association

Apiary hygiene

At the moment the area with confirmed EFB is in Tayside with a higher concentration in Strathmore. This may change as additional areas are investigated. Anyone in or near an infected area who has more than one apiary and anyone planning a gathering of beekeepers may like to consider improving their apiary hygiene.

It makes sense to put into place a biosecurity policy for meetings of beekeepers where colonies will be opened. It may also be desirable to hold training events at infected sites to encourage wider recognition of EFB. A suitable procedure could be:

1. Hand out instructions on arrival to participants, and ask them to leave the instructions in their vehicle to take away.
2. Ask participants in advance to wash suits before the visit if at all possible, and leave behind all hive tools and gloves.
3. Issue suitable disposable gloves on arrival.
4. Arrange a 'step-over' point at the exit to the car park or entrance to the apiary and spray footwear including soles with appropriate disinfectant (Virkon, or domestic scented non-hypochlorite disinfectant) of all beekeepers attending.
5. Especially if combs are being passed around (eg to smell suspect larvae), request that veils and jackets are washed after the event.
6. Spray footwear at the 'step-over' point on leaving the site.

Beekeepers with apiaries in infected areas and indeed already infected apiaries would wish to reduce the spread of infection within and between their apiaries by strict and routine apiary hygiene.

The following advice comes from Peter Edwards of Stratford upon Avon who has experience of ridding his operation of EFB and who comments as follows:

An important distinction between EFB and AFB is the ease with which it is transmitted within the apiary. Our one-time RBI used to repeat (ad nauseam!): 'AFB is a disease of the colony, EFB is a disease of the apiary'.

He has also extended the basic advice offered by the National Bee Unit in York as follows:

I use soda wash for handling (as per NBU recommendation) all the time, see: <http://www.stratford-upon-avon.freeserve.co.uk/Newsletters/May2002.htm>

Important not to spread disease between colonies within the apiary as well.

Washing boiler suits and veils would be a sensible precaution. Incidentally, the best single use gloves I have found are these from Justgloves: <http://www.justgloves.co.uk/Standard-Powdered-Latex-AQL-1.5.aspx>

These are very strong and I have not had any split when pulling them on over Marigolds - other makes I have used in the past have been very flimsy. (You need powdered - makes it much easier to get them on).

The key text in the first link is as follows:

Just to be clear, the solution is made by adding 1kg of washing soda crystals to 1 gallon of water and adding a squirt of washing up liquid to act as a wetting agent. The solution can be kept in a screw top gallon container. For each apiary visit, a small quantity - perhaps a pint - is poured into a suitable container (30lb plastic honey bucket). A small brush should be kept in the container.

Bees are examined using kitchen (Marigold) gloves with a pair of single use latex gloves over them - you soon get the knack of putting them on! After each colony, gloves and hive tool are washed in the soda solution and the smoker is brushed with the solution where it has been held. If you have a number of colonies, it is a good idea to have a couple of hive tools so that one is soaking while the other is in use. If you use an uncapping fork to check for varroa, then this should also live in the soda bucket. After each apiary, the soda and single use gloves are discarded.

If anyone else reading this document has useful experience to relate of the measures required to reduce the spread of EFB, please get in touch.

Gavin Ramsay
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Tel: 07751 142155

Email: gavinramsay@btinternet.com

Bee Diseases Convener
Scottish Beekeeping Association