



# SABIO

South African Bee Industry Organisation

PO Box 14840  
Hatfield  
0028

[www.sabio.org.za](http://www.sabio.org.za)

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## **Progress report from the Chairman of SABIO regarding the outbreak of American Foul Brood in the Western Cape.**

**On Monday 16 March SABIO Chairman and Vice- Chairman together with ARC representatives met with DoA representatives in Johannesburg to discuss measures to be taken to contain the AFB outbreak in the Western Cape. Requests regarding the outbreak were made as follows:**

- 1. The survey regarding the extent of the outbreak be completed as soon as possible – the four apiaries infected were identified. Further sampling was in progress and feedback would be given regarding the full extent of the outbreak.**
- 2. The decision regarding a ‘stand still’ for infected colonies was requested until they were assessed and treated either by being managed or by destruction. An infection level of more than 50 cells in a colony was suggested as tolerance level for leaving or destroying the colony.**
- 3. We requested that beekeepers be appointed as inspectors to monitor the outbreak. The ARC was willing to train these inspectors.**
- 4. The urgency of having a strategy in place as soon as possible was stressed as pollination would mean that colonies would have to be moved around to service orchards.**
- 5. Compensation for colonies destroyed was requested to ensure that communication channels remained open so reports of infected colonies were made rather than having beekeepers remain silent.**
- 6. The ARC investigates the origin of the AFB as far as possible to determine which particular strain of AFB we have in this country.**

**The DoA responded that in principle it was determined to do everything possible to contain the outbreak. However the lack of suitable legislation was a limiting factor. There was no regulation in place to control or contain AFB and in order to pass such legislation time was needed. An order would be given directed to those with infected bees until the problem was managed – pending the creation of regulations to control infected areas. The strategy to be implemented was left up to the DoA and we are waiting for clarity in this regard.**

**Any compensation would depend on the Minister and it would be up to us to lobby for it. A difficulty is that all actions taken to control AFB fall under Pest/Plant Control and compensation was not generally paid out for this purpose. The DoA had as its priority containing the outbreak. We need to make a case for compensation if hives are to be destroyed, as a stand still will make normal beekeeping impossible.**

**In the meanwhile we strongly recommend that all beekeepers examine their brood boxes for AFB and report any sign of American Foul Brood. The most serious risk for infestation seems to be the cleaning of wet supers by bees after extraction when supers from infected apiaries are left out to be cleaned by bees not yet contaminated. It is therefore imperative that any infected colonies are identified and isolated. The spreading of the disease by wax foundation and honey in bottles is a risk but it seems not to be as high as was anticipated by some beekeepers.**

**Mike Allsopp reports that no more cases of infected colonies have been reported. Please contact him if you suspect that you have any positive identifications. The areas at greatest risk are from Cape Point up to the Hottentot's Holland Mountains – with some areas up the West Coast included.**

**Signed : John Moodie (Chairman SABIO)**

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