



SABIO

South African Bee Industry Organisation

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www.sabio.org.za

AMERICAN FOULBROOD JOC, STELLENBOSCH

INSPECTION PRIORITIZATION

[Beekeeper = Any person in control of one or more swarm(s) of honeybees]

Dear Beekeeper

Most beekeepers will already know that we now have the potentially deadly bee disease American Foulbrood (AFB) in South Africa. At present it has only been found in the Western Cape, in the area bordered by Cape Point, Malmesbury, Darling and Caledon, but it may already be present in other parts of the Western Cape or in other parts of South Africa.

After extensive consultation with beekeeper bodies, crop producers, and other levels of government, the Department of Agriculture (DoA) is conducting an intensive **information gathering** exercise to determine how best to respond to the threat posed by AFB. To gather this information, as many beekeepers and apiaries as possible will be visited by DoA inspectors, with samples of honey collected for AFB analysis. In addition, precautionary measures are being taken to ensure that the situation does not worsen while the information necessary to determine the status of AFB in South Africa is being gathered. These additional measures will be by means of new regulations, **will probably apply only until 15 July 2009 and will apply to all beekeepers south of the “Capensis Line”** as follows :

- a. A complete suspension of the movement of all bee colonies, hive components or bee products from apiaries until the apiary has been inspected and verified to be free of AFB, at which time normal beekeeping activities can continue.
- b. The compulsory destruction of all colonies found to have clinical symptoms of AFB.
- c. A provision to ensure that bulk honey and other bee products (but not bottled honey) shipped from within the Capensis area to other parts of South Africa is free from AFB.

It is important to remember that the purpose of the exercise is to gather as much information as possible so that by the end of July 2009 an informed decision can be made as regards the best way forward, in the full knowledge that a general standstill order **cannot** continue into August 2009 as colonies are needed for pollination.

Beekeepers can ensure that they contribute to this information gathering process by completing the attached questionnaire. And, bearing in mind that a beekeeper will be cleared to carry on normal beekeeping operations as soon as his apiaries are found to be AFB free, it is in the interests of every beekeeper to get inspected as soon as possible. **The sooner you submit the questionnaire, the sooner you will get inspected, and the sooner you will be able to continue your beekeeping operation as normal.**

The precautionary orders will have no negative effect on many beekeepers, those with sedentary apiary sites, those not doing pollination and those not collecting a winter crop. For these people, there is no urgency to be inspected, except to provide additional information on the distribution of AFB. There are, however, some beekeepers for whom the precautionary measures have significant impact. These are beekeepers who have early pollination contracts, beekeepers who are preparing their bees for pollination, or beekeepers that have winter honey crops. **For these beekeepers with imminent commercial requirements for their bees, the questionnaire is especially important, as they will be inspected first in order to compromise their commercial interests as little as possible.**

All beekeepers south of the "Capensis Line" are therefore strongly urged to complete the attached questionnaire as speedily as possible, and to return it to :

Mr Riaan van Zyl

Email riaanz@nda.agric.za

Fax 021-8879457 / 086-6654962

With your help we can ensure that we have enough information to make the right decision about AFB, without having a serious negative effect on the business of any beekeeper.

Sincerely

AFB JOC :

Mike Allsopp 083 288 5059

Riaan van Zyl 083 414 2494

Dawid Smit 083 655 2280

