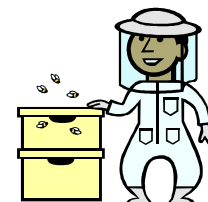


Apiary & Bee Product Hygiene Rules



1. General Principles

Beekeepers must avoid any procedure that risks cross infection of colonies and risks introducing varroa and other mites, hive beetle, nosema and amoebas, fungal infections and foul brood. Beekeepers must not contaminate comb that could possibly be consumed: including royal jelly, pollen, capped or uncapped honey.

Remember: The beekeeper is the main cause of disease within colonies and the main source of honey contamination.

2. Personal Hygiene

2.1 Clothing should be free from dirt and exposure to other sources of food contamination, bee colonies or products;

2.2 Footwear should be washed regularly eg between colony inspections, to avoid introduction of faecal or organic matter;

2.3 Hands should be washed and gloves disposable or clean and particular to the hive being worked;

2.4 Avoid sneezing & coughing over the hive – and use a suitable method for disposing of bodily secretions.

3. Organisation & Working Practices

3.1 Equipment should be sterilised and free from previous products and detritus;

3.2 Use separate trays/containers for (1) routine tools e.g. hive tool and capping fork and (2) for occasional use equipment e.g. queen cages;

3.3 Keep a bucket for used equipment and a container for rubbish or material removed e.g. propolis, brace comb, dead bees;

3.4 Disposal:

Wax and detritus eg from solar extractors can be buried or burnt;

Honey washed down drains or buried;

Frames flamed/scorched or dipped in sterilising solution;

Wire – in bin;

A larger container e.g. bin bag, eke, brood box or super may be required for placing combs for disposal, extraction or temporary placement outside the hive being inspected.

3.5 Use a sterilisation bucket for used tools and equipment should you plan to work with more than one colony (with suitable solution e.g. washing soda);

3.6 Keep equipment off the ground i.e. upturned roof, on trays or plastic sheet;

3.7 Protect equipment from the curiosity of and contact with other bees.

3.8 Think ! Prepare in advance before inspection and carrying out procedures:
What am I planning to do today?

Do I have the clean equipment?

What other eventualities should I plan for?

4. Apiary Bio-Security

4.1 Use clean sources of water for bees and hives and remove sources of stagnant and potentially contaminated water that bees could access;

4.2 Keep hives at a suitable height off the ground, placed above ground that can be inspected and cleaned at each inspection;

4.3 Distance between hives should be greater than 1.2m, and entrances oriented to avoid bees drifting between hives;

4.4 Stick to your own colony – avoid beekeeper “drift”

4.5 On removing rubbish from apiary, dustbins/trash cans to be secured;

4.6 Beekeepers should work quickly and efficiently when inspecting: an exposed hive/comb invites robbing and risks contaminates from the air and ground;

4.7 Know the signs of endemic and exotic bee diseases and pests: regularly check bees and hives and report all pests and diseases.

5. Inter Apiary procedures and rules

5.1 Do not introduce new bees, swarms, or colonies without approval and/or inspection by a regional bee inspector;

5.2 Re-queening must be from a reputable and legal source;

5.3 Use an isolation apiary for new colonies, swarms and castes for a minimum of 48 hours;

5.4 Inspect and treat all new introductions for varroa: dead or dying colonies are a threat to other bees. Seal and kill off remaining bees, remove, destroy burn or sterilise all materials removed.

6. Feeding Bees

6.1 Do not feed bees honey or untreated pollen;

6.2 Use sterile sugar solutions, syrups and fondant only;

6.3 Prepare feed in a dedicated or agreed place.

7. Awareness of Apiary Hygiene Procedures

7.1 Train all those using the apiary;

7.2 Instruct visitors in advance of them approaching colonies;

7.3 Nominate a QA person for apiary hygiene;

7.4 Post prominently your apiary procedures and contact names.

SD Foster December 2008