

Incursion update

31/07/22

Reporting of this incursion has been focused on mite detections and the red dots on maps. The work that has been conducted by the 30 odd field teams of beekeeper volunteers, DPI, RFS and LLS staff across the red, purple, yellow and blue zones is often not highlighted.

To date there has been over 18,000 hives surveyed for mites across all the zones with a combination of alcohol washes and strips/mats. Despite 18,000 hives being tested only 56 infested premises have been detected with only 3 of these infested premises being outside the Newcastle red zones.

Over the past couple of weeks, the focus has been on surveillance in the perimeter of the Newcastle zone to ensure the incursion has been delimited and a solid edge could be found. This surveillance has only identified a few new IP's in the Newcastle area. This provides the Incident Management Team (IMT) with a renewed confidence that the incursion is contained.

Tracing efforts have been successful in following hives that have moved out of the zones over the last few months. Thousands of hives, identified through tracing across the blue zone have been tested and resulted in 3 detections outside of the Newcastle zone Trangie, Narrabri and Coffs Harbor. All of these detections have all been low mite numbers and traced to direct, recent movements out of the Newcastle zone. Surveillance around these detections have not detected any transfer of mites to other managed hives or feral colonies. Further, intense surveillance, including mats and strips in these remote zones will give the IMT greater confidence with the goal of declaring these areas free from mites and remove the zones in time.

The associated intensive surveillance with the movement of hives to pollination will give us, as an industry, a good indication that the incursion is contained or not. All beekeepers that are moving hives have signed a legal declaration to say their hives have only been in the lower risk, general emergency zone. If no mites are found then the IMT will be given a high level of confidence it is contained, and eradication is achievable.

Eradication is the focus of the IMT until the National Management Group decide it is not technically feasible to eradicate.