



Queensland Beekeepers' Association

Varroa Mite Update – 14th February 2024

The detection of *Varroa destructor* in Newcastle on the 22nd June 2022 and the subsequent notice the eradication program will transition to management announced on 20th September 2023 has created much anxiety within the Australian beekeeping industry. In an effort to streamline our communications to our members the QBA will now offer weekly updates (where possible) to our members and affiliate clubs giving insight into our current areas of focus.

Update 14th February 2024

Bee 123 Data Surveillance Program 1st February 2024 to current day:

Total beekeepers reporting results	62
Total Hives checked	960
Total hives reported	5366
Total No. of Recreational Beekeeper Surveys:	26
Total No. of Commercial Beekeeper Surveys:	36
Mites found or suspected	0

QBA Update 14th February 2024

Transition to Management Update:

Yesterday (13th February 2024) AHBIC made contact with the QBA to advise the final draft of the National Transition to Management plan had been approved at the National Management Group Meeting on Friday 9th February 2024.

Over the course of the 143 days between the announcement that eradication of varroa mite was no longer feasible, the QBA is pleased to see all parties (CCEPP & NMG) reach a consensus on a way forward.

We eagerly await the opportunity to view the 'public version' of the plan alongside our industry colleagues. QBA members can be reassured your executive team have been going to great lengths behind the scenes to ensure the Queensland State Government funds additional programs and measures that will hopefully see a multi-year, meaningful, and practical program roll out to support the beekeepers of Queensland.

Border permits:

Biosecurity Queensland is now accepting applications for Biosecurity Instrument Permits for moving honey supers from NSW into QLD, and the movement of Apiary Equipment into Queensland. Please email the VMPPP team at BQ (varroa@daf.qld.gov.au) to learn more about making an application and the conditions you will need to meet in order to be considered to move supers or equipment.

Live bees, queens and their escorts from NSW continue to be restricted from entering Queensland. We ask that you direct your enquires to the VMPPP team for all matters related to any movements from NSW.

Beekeepers attending the QBA Varroa Mite Workshops will be briefed on the Departments plans to facilitate this program.

Bee 123 Update:

The QBA is again calling on **EVERY** Beekeeper in Queensland to complete varroa surveillance and report your results to the Bee 123 portal as soon as possible.

Over the past two weeks we have seen increased engagement from Beekeepers reporting their results. Again only 62 beekeepers have reported surveillance of the 10,200 registered beekeepers in Queensland. These statistics **must** improve.

One of the two key factors all beekeepers must understand is the data gives beekeepers greater visibility on the current level of negative surveillance across the state. The second factor to understand is data collected from the Bee 123 portal within the past 16 weeks provides decision-makers and those responding to the initial detection of varroa in Queensland with information to make educated decisions.

When the time comes that varroa is detected in Queensland, the QBA's aim is to ensure the response measures deployed to beekeepers in infested regions is more than adequate and purposeful. We're talking support officers on the ground, educational workshops of a practical nature for our beekeepers and options for treatment being accessible to ensure we have the ability to initiate and deploy intervention to infested colonies should mite levels reach treatment thresholds.

Should varroa be detected and confirmed in Queensland within our current surveillance and reporting period, the lack of data presently in the Bee 123 portal poorly places the collective ability of Biosecurity Queensland and the QBA to stand-up an effective, meaningful, and practical response and support operation in any region across the state.

We recognise changing our beekeeping behaviour to adjust to surveillance and eventually monitoring for the mite is new to every beekeeper across the country. The frustration and disappointment that a beekeeper currently experiences upon coming across a dead-out will be exacerbated once varroa mite arrives in Queensland. And to take a page from Dr Jack's summary at conference last year, if you're not looking for it now, when you eventually realise you have a mite infestation in your hives it may well be too-late to bring a colony or a load of bees back from the brink of certain mortality.

Please refrain from having a false sense of surety relying on the beekeeper managing their apiary up to the road to be looking for varroa and reporting the surveillance, because they're not. Apiarists' who learn to adapt and adjust to the new varroa surveillance and monitoring regime will live on keeping bees well beyond the initial detection in their colonies. Beekeepers who don't test will become bee-havers in addition to being a costly liability to anyone trying to manage varroa.

In the current surveillance phase and broader national transition phase many decisions will be made despite the QBA's unyielding efforts to secure practical and purposeful outcomes for our sector. Our ability to work with DAF to deliver successful project outcomes will be underpinned by the current and future engagement of every beekeeper in the state looking for varroa and reporting their results.

Test for varroa and report your results.

Bee 123 QLD Surveillance Dashboard Map 14th February 2024

The maps below illustrate the current distribution of varroa mite surveillance activities reported to the Bee 123 portal. The QBA and DAF urge all beekeepers across Queensland to complete varroa mite surveillance activities immediately and report their results (including negative results) to the portal.

The blue dots on the map represent negative surveillance results from 62 varroa mite surveillance activities reported to the Bee 123 portal since the 1st February 2024

Please see the page below to review the current distribution of varroa mite surveillance reports as collated from data collected from the Bee 123 portal.

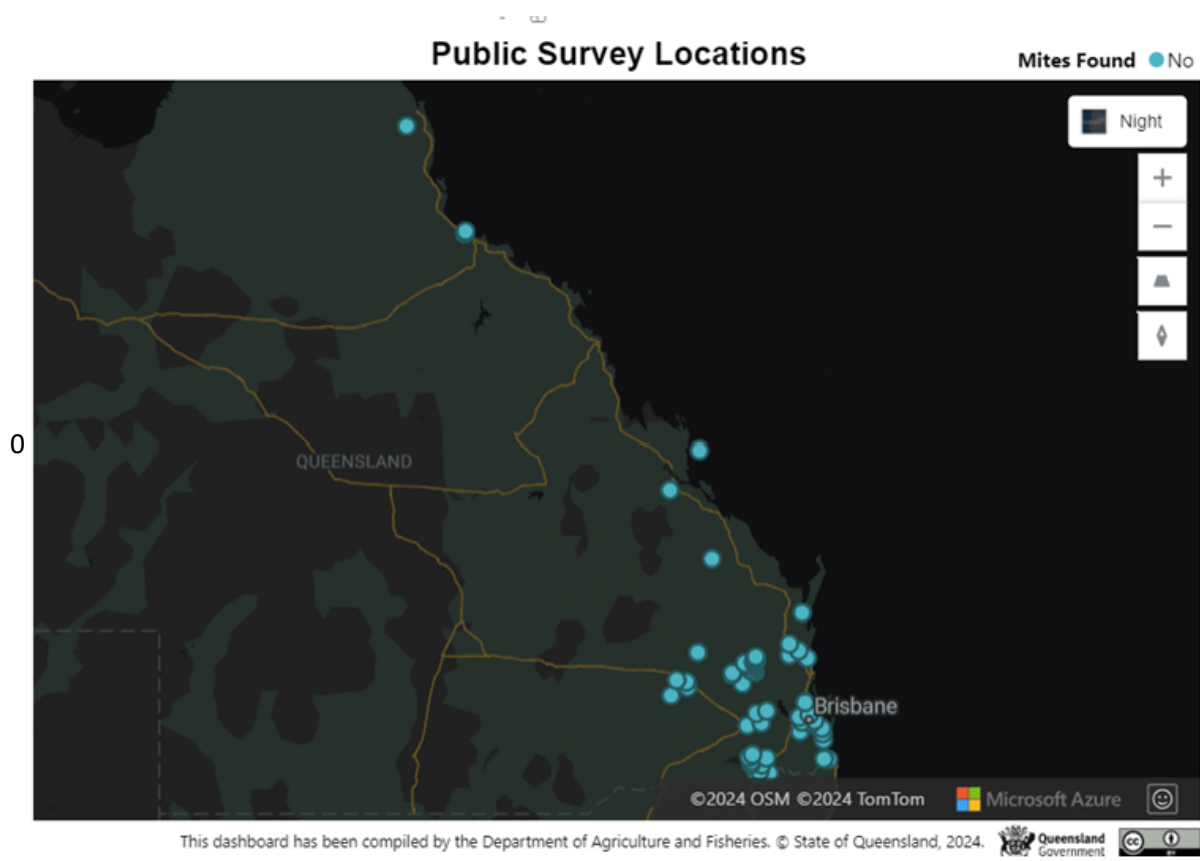


Figure 1 - Bee 123 Surveillance Reports – 1 February – 14 February 2024

Miticide Surveillance Expressions of Interest:

The QBA has long advocated for a dedicated and targeted program to increase the accuracy of varroa mite surveillance across the state. In late November Biosecurity Queensland agreed to undertake a miticide and sticky mat surveillance program mainly targeted at migratory hives.

Biosecurity Queensland initially contacted a large number of beekeepers to ascertain their interest in having their hives surveyed using miticide strips and sticky mats. To date only a small number of beekeepers have provided offered their hives to this important program.

The QBA is now calling all beekeepers interested in having their hives tested for varroa using strips and mats to make contact with the VMPPP team as soon as physically possible.

Beekeepers who offer their hives to be tested (50 hives in a load) will have a greater level of confidence their hives are presently free from varroa whilst also contributing critical information to our state surveillance program that may translate to resources being in prepositioned in readiness to rapidly respond in an effective operation once varroa finally hits the ground.

On the plus side, strip and mat surveillance alleviates the number of alcohol washes one needs to undertake.

If you're interested in offering your hives to this program, please contact the varroa mite prevention and preparedness team via email varroa@daf.qld.gov.au or call 13 25 23.

Future Events:

QBA Varroa mite Management Workshops:

Have you completed your online registration to attend the QBA's Varroa mite workshops.

More information about the location and date of workshop in your region will be posted to the QBA's event calendar ([click here for more information](#)).

Past Events

AHBIC Industry Briefing – 19 October 2023

As previously communicated, AHBIC held another Industry Briefing detailing the latest information with regards to the current varroa mite situation, providing some clarity for industry members on the transition to management phase.

If you missed watching the webinar, we strongly urge all beekeepers to watch the recording at their earliest convenience. Please click [here](#) to access the recording.

Below is a list of some of the websites referred to in the webinar.

[NSW Department of Primary Industries – Varroa Response](#)

[Agriculture Victoria – Varroa Situation](#)

For information related to the response in QLD, please visit:

[Biosecurity Queensland - Manage Varroa Mite](#)

Video Resources:

The QBA now have a dedicated YouTube channels with multiple playlists offering a dynamic range of subject matter relevant to beekeeping in Queensland. We encourage all members to explore our online video library and recommend members regularly visit our YouTube channel to discover new content from time to time.

If you'd like to visit our YouTube channel, click on the link below.

<https://www.youtube.com/@queenslandbeekeepersassoc>

QBA Toolbox Talk Episode 7 – Wednesday 24th January 2024

Watch the recording of the talk on [YouTube](#).

QBA Membership:

The Queensland Beekeepers' Association warmly welcome new members to our organisation. To complete an application for membership please visit <https://members.qbabees.org.au/join-us/>

When completing your application, please nominate your preferred branch of the QBA.

Useful Information Links:

QBA Varroa mite portal - <https://members.qbabees.org.au/QBA-Varroa-Mite-Portal>

DAF Varroa Mite Management Hub: <https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/agriculture/animal/industries/bees/varroa-mite/manage>

NSW DPI - <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/emergencies/biosecurity/current-situation/varroa-mite-emergency-response>

Need more information about varroa mite in Queensland?

Call DAF: 13 25 23

Email your inquiry straight to the VMPPP team: varroa@daf.qld.gov.au

Or check the Varroa Management Website from DAF: [Biosecurity Queensland - Manage Varroa Mite](#)

Subscribe to Biosecurity E-Alerts – [Click here.](#)