



Queensland Beekeepers' Association

Weekly Varroa Mite Update – Week Ending 21/12/2022

The detection of *Varroa destructor* in Newcastle on the 22nd June 2022 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 to our members and affiliate clubs giving insight into our current areas of focus.

We actively encourage all beekeepers to undertake varroa mite surveillance activities on managed hives and report the results (including negative results) to the Bee 123 portal. For more information on the Bee 123 portal please click [here](#).

Weekly Update 21 December 2022

Bee 123 data to date:

Total beekeepers reporting results	405
Total Hives checked	3724
Total hives reported	14934
Total No. of Recreational Beekeeper Surveys:	282
Total No. of Commercial Beekeeper Surveys:	119
Mites found or suspected	0

Biosecurity Queensland and QBA weekly update 21 December 2022

Varroa Mite Prevention and Preparedness Program

- DAF have committed additional funding to support varroa mite prevention and preparedness activities to 30 June 2023
- The current Varroa Preparedness Working Group within Biosecurity Queensland will transition to a Varroa Mite Prevention and Preparedness Program (VMPPP) from 23 December 2022
- The VMPPP will deliver a program of work to manage the risk of varroa entering Queensland and continue to manage ongoing permitting and compliance requirements for movement of bees and related carriers into Qld as well as communication activities to support increased surveillance to support area freedom for Queensland
- The VMPPP will also work with Agriscience Queensland to develop a contingency plan for transition to management for industry

Biosecurity Instrument Permit applications completed

○ Approved	34
○ In progress	7
○ Not approved/available	8
○ Total completed	49

Permit condition compliance inspections

- 3 Inspections undertaken - all found to be compliant
- 1 Investigation into alleged breach completed – Warning Letter to be issued.

Communications

- The Qld Bee Biosecurity Officer (BBO) attended the Valley Bees Community Group Field Day at Gympie Landcare on 3 December 2022 and had 30 attendees.
- The BBO will be presenting a mite check demonstration at the Bayside Beekeepers Field Day event in Cleveland on the 8 January 2023.
- Additional communication material is being prepared to encourage beekeepers to check their hives and report to Bee 123:
- DAF continues to meet with the QBA and industry partners fortnightly to discuss progress with prevention activities to support keeping Queensland free of varroa mite.

Bee 123 QLD Surveillance Dashboard Map 21 December 2022

The map below illustrates 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 represent negative surveillance results from 405 varroa mite surveillance activities reported to the Bee 123 portal since the 13th of July.



Figure 1 - Bee 123 Surveillance Reports – 21/12/2022

As a part of the response plan to varroa, each state government are required to provide a declaration of Area of Freedom from varroa mite (95% confidence that Queensland is free from varroa mite).

In order for a declaration of area of freedom to be made, a state jurisdiction must provide evidence of negative surveillance data collected from industry and government. To date, Queensland surveillance results fall drastically short of the 95% target necessary to declare area of freedom.

Since the detection of varroa *destructor* in June this year, movement control orders have largely prohibited the once 'free' movement of honey bees and their related by products across much of the east coast of Australia. Although movement controls are necessary to keep other states free from the mite, border closures have presented significant challenges not only for migratory beekeepers, but for anyone attempting to resource managed hives for pollination, placement of hives onto floral resource and securing queens & breeder queens to replace ageing queen bees for the season ahead.

In short, the state government must see a significant increase in varroa mite surveillance activities in order to declare area of freedom. In order to reach the 95% confidence level, industry and government surveillance activities must increase as a matter of immediate priority.

Should Queensland fail to meet the target of 95% confidence in freedom from the mite, other jurisdictions may place additional control measures on honey bees, queens and other varroa mite carriers leaving Queensland for southern states. In short, although in the future Queensland may allow the movement of bees from other states under a border control permit system, other states may place movement controls that prohibit any bees from moving south unless the state can prove area of freedom.

Varroa mite surveillance and the reporting of the surveillance is a practice that is here to stay especially whilst an active response and eradication program is in place.

Every beekeeper across the country has a biosecurity obligation to the greater industry, your fellow beekeepers and ultimately our precious honey bees that are depending on us to protect the future health and prosperity of the sector. Please, where possible, complete and report your varroa mite surveillance as a matter of priority.

Please report all surveillance activities to the Bee 123 portal. Click [here](#) to learn more.

AHBIC

AHBIC is seeking further expressions of interest from beekeepers willing to volunteer to assist with control operations for the current Varroa biosecurity emergency.

Volunteer beekeepers have been a vital part of the varroa response, and their assistance is greatly appreciated.

Volunteers are not paid for their time, but travel, food and accommodation will be provided, and travel and food costs will be reimbursed.

Operations are currently being carried out at Narrabri, Coffs Harbour and the Hunter region. Volunteers are invited to select their preferred destination, but won't necessarily be deployed to their chosen location.

Please note that volunteers must be members of an AHBIC member body, so please do not share this form publicly.

Beekeepers must register their interest on the on-line form. Click [here](#) to download the on-line form.

Past Events:

The recording of AHBIC's online webinar held on 31 August 2022 can now be watched from your computer or electronic device. Please [click here](#) to watch the presentation.

The recording of the Varroa Mite Biosecurity Queensland webinar held on Tuesday 11th October is now available online and ready for beekeepers to watch at their leisure. This webinar covers topics relating to the current situation update in Queensland, reporting your surveillance results to the Bee 123 app, and applying for a permit to move honey supers, equipment for irradiation and the movement of PPE. Please [click here](#) to watch the webinar.

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 Engagement Hub - <https://daf.engagementhub.com.au/varroa-mite>

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

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