



Queensland Beekeepers' Association

Weekly Varroa Mite Update – Week Ending 23rd February 2023

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 23 February 2023

Bee 123 data to date:

Total beekeepers reporting results	464
Total Hives checked	4260
Total hives reported	17515
Total No. of Recreational Beekeeper Surveys:	317
Total No. of Commercial Beekeeper Surveys:	143
Mites found or suspected	0

Biosecurity Queensland and QBA weekly update 23 February 2023

New biosecurity zone for Queensland & Temporary Suspension of Movements of live bees into Queensland.

- Queensland is now a varroa mite [biosecurity zone](#). You cannot move bees, beehives, used beekeeping equipment or bee products (including unprocessed honey) into Queensland from states or territories where varroa mite has been found, without a permit issued by the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.
- Late last week, varroa mite (*Varroa destructor*) was confirmed at two additional sites in New South Wales (NSW) near Taree, in the General Emergency Zone (GEZ, blue zone), about 75 km north of the northern most detection at Bulahdelah. This brings the total number of infested premises in NSW to 119.
- The two detections are directly linked to known infested premises in the current red zone and are suspected to be due to illegal movement of hives from the NSW Eradication Zone (red zone). These suspected movements are currently being investigated by the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI).

- Issuance of movement permits for entry of live bees into Queensland has been **temporarily suspended** until NSW has completed its investigation.
- Movement of used bee keeping equipment is still being permitted from the GEZ for irradiation treatment as risks of transporting varroa mites are mitigated through the conditions specified in the permit, including secure transport and irradiation treatment.
- You can apply online for a [biosecurity instrument permit](#) or by calling the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries Customer Service Centre on 13 25 23.

Queensland Bee Biosecurity Officer will be attending:

- Gold Coast Regional Beekeepers at Nerang on the 18th February 2023
- Ipswich and West Moreton Beekeepers Association Meeting 7th March 2023

Biosecurity Instrument Permit applications completed

○ Approved	77
○ In progress	9
○ Not approved/available	10
○ Total completed	58

Permit condition compliance inspections

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

Communications

- 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 23 February 2023

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 **464** varroa mite surveillance activities reported to the Bee 123 portal since the 13th of July.

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 – 23 February 2023

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.

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.

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 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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