



Varroa mite

EMERGENCY RESPONSE



Varroa mite eradication shifts to removal of wild European honey bees – Jerrys Plains

NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI) is continuing efforts in response to the Varroa mite incursion, confirmed as *Varroa destructor*, detected in biosecurity surveillance hives at the Port of Newcastle.

The apiary industry, Local Land Services, Rural Fire Service, National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Environmental Protection Authority have been welcome and important partners with NSW DPI in this national response.

Following detection of Varroa mite, our team has worked to contain, trace and eradicate the bee parasitic mite from zones in NSW. As the response moves closer to all managed European honey bees within 10km of a Varroa mite infested hive being euthanised, the focus is shifting to euthanising wild European honeybees within the eradication zone.

Wild European honeybee management plan

Following on from the euthanasia and destruction of recreational and commercially managed hives within the red eradication emergency zone, the next phase in the eradication of Varroa mite includes the complete removal of wild European honeybees from the zone.

Information on the emergency zones can be found at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/varroa.

Euthanasia of wild European honey bees will be completed using a commonly available insecticide called fipronil. Fipronil bait stations will be located and operated by NSW DPI within the 10 kilometre zone around each of the premises where Varroa mite was detected (the Varroa mite red eradication emergency zone).

To ensure the safety of people, animals, livestock and the environment this work is strictly controlled by NSW DPI, in accordance with an Australian Pesticide and Veterinary Medicines Authority permit [PER84929v2]. The fipronil bait stations are designed to exclude other animals and insects, and to prevent contamination of soil and water. While the fipronil bait stations are in active use the baited area will be supervised by trained staff.

Rollout of the plan

The first round of bait stations to be deployed are in the **Jerrys Plains** area. These bait stations will be operational from early October for up to 12 months.

As the plan rolls out across the eradication zones over the next few months, DPI will notify registered beekeepers within proximity to where bait stations will be deployed and are directly contacting landholders where bait stations are to be installed.

As per the *Biosecurity Act 2015*, landholders are required to authorise biosecurity officers to access properties to place fipronil baits in the red eradication emergency zone if requested to do so.

Bait stations will be placed in an 8 km radius from an infected premises. There will be a 2 km buffer between bait stations and the purple notification emergency zone.

What actions do people need to take?

All bait stations will be clearly marked with signage as per the requirements of the APVMA permit, including instructions for persons to not tamper with bait station equipment.

We encourage people to help protect Australia's food security by contacting NSW DPI if they see European honeybee hives in the Varroa mite red eradication emergency zone at any time over the next 12 months. Call the Biosecurity Helpline 1800 680 244 or the online form, found at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/varroa.

The [Biosecurity \(Varroa mite\) Emergency Order](#) outlining the use of fipronil for the eradication of Varroa mites is available at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/varroa.

Production and sale of honey

NSW DPI is permitted to use fipronil to euthanise wild European honey bee under permit [PER84929v2] from the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority.

Without any managed European honey bee hives within the eradication zone there won't be any honey production in the area, however it should be noted that under the permit, all hive products including honey and wax must be destroyed and not be consumed by humans or animals. Hive products must not be made available for sale or export as a raw or processed product.

Native Australian bees

Native Australian bees are not affected by Varroa mite. There is however, a very low risk that some native bees may be affected by the insecticide used to euthanise wild European honeybees.

A number of mitigation factors are in place to reduce this risk, including:

- Preliminary work conducted to attract wild European honeybees to the bait stations
- Use of bait stations designed and operated to exclude non-target animals
- Use of fipronil in bait stations only when bees are active and when the baited area is under supervision by trained staff
- Removal of fipronil from bait stations overnight

Although native Australian bees are considered to forage only short distances from their hives, beekeepers who manage native hives should consider moving their native beehives from the Eradication Zone or edge of the Surveillance Zone to avoid their bees having any contact with bait stations. Native bees are not covered by the current Varroa Mite Emergency Order and can be moved anytime without a permit.

NSW DPI will continually update the Australian Native Bee Association on the progress of baiting as the response continues.

If you need advice on managing native bees near fipronil bait stations, contact the Australian Native Bee Association for advice.

Wellbeing

NSW DPI recognises the impact the Varroa mite emergency response is having on beekeepers and the broader community.

Information and contacts for wellbeing support is available on the DPI website at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/varroa

Thank you for your continued support of this essential biosecurity work. If you have any enquiries, please contact the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline **1800 084 881** (9am to 5pm, 7 days a week) or visit the NSW DPI Varroa mite [website](#)