

MOVEMENT CONTROL ORDER NOTICE – VARROA MITE (VARROA DESTRUCTOR) AND CARRIERS

Pursuant to section 124 of the *Biosecurity Act 2014* (the Act), I make the following movement control order.

1. Why this movement control order is being made and what it is intended to achieve

This movement control order is being made to assist in preventing the entry of *Varroa destructor* (varroa mite) into Queensland, on the basis that:

- *Varroa destructor* (varroa mite) has been found in biosecurity surveillance hives at the Port of Newcastle, New South Wales (NSW).
- the NSW Department of Primary Industries is undertaking an emergency response to the recent detection of varroa mite at the Port of Newcastle. As part of the NSW emergency response, an eradication plan is in place in NSW, which is supported by a number of varroa mite emergency zones covering areas within a 50 km radius of infested premises. The quarantine area may change over time.
- the presence of varroa mite in NSW is a serious risk to the honey bee industry and plant industries dependent on honey bee pollination in Queensland.
- if the NSW movement control and prevention measures fail and varroa mite enters Queensland, there are limited control options for eradicating varroa mite once it has entered Queensland.

Varroa mite can be spread on and within various carriers. In this context, I consider it necessary to make this movement control order, to restrict the movement of varroa mite and its carriers into Queensland, as I am satisfied on reasonable grounds that varroa mite poses a biosecurity risk of enough seriousness, and the risk of entry, establishment and spread is high enough to justify the making of the order.

2. Details of the controlled biosecurity matter and carriers to which the movement control order relates

The movement control order applies to *Varroa destructor* (varroa mite) and all known carriers, as detailed below.

Controlled biosecurity matter (varroa mite)

The varroa mite is an external parasite of adult honey bees, and drone and worker bee brood. Varroa mite feeds and reproduces on larvae and pupae, causing malformation and weakening of honey bees as well as transmitting numerous viruses. Heavy varroa mite infestations can build up in 3 – 4 years and cause scattered brood, crippled and crawling honey bees, a reduction in honey bee population, supersedure of queen bees and ultimately colony breakdown and death of the hive.

Adult female varroa mites are oval, flat, red-brown and around 1.1 mm long and 1.5 mm wide. They can be seen with the naked eye. Varroa mites complete their life cycle in honey bee brood and can be observed in both drone and worker bee brood. Examining the brood involves uncapping brood to check for the dark mites in the cell and against the pearly white bodies of the developing brood. They can also be observed between the sclerites and between the head and thorax on adult worker bees and drones.

Varroa mite is considered one of the most serious pests of honey bees worldwide. Australia is the only continent to remain free of varroa mite.

No effective natural enemies of varroa mite are reported in the scientific or technical literature from anywhere in the world, limiting the potential for biological control. Eradication from infested hives is not possible, though chemical, biotechnical and biological control methods mitigate the impacts.

Establishment of this pest in Queensland is highly likely to have a significant impact on the honey bee industry and plant industries dependant on honey bee pollination.

Carriers (*varroa mite carriers*)

Varroa mite can be spread on any of the following carriers: a bee; a swarm, nest or hive of bees; an apiary appliance; or an apiary product, which are defined as follows in this movement control order:

- (a) Bee means European honey bee (*Apis mellifera*) or Asian honey bee (*Apis cerana*) of any life stage, including a dead bee
- (b) Swarm means a group of bees, either European honey bee or Asian honey bee, that has left a hive or a nest with a queen bee to start a new colony
- (c) Nest means a natural shelter for bees and includes the bees, either European honey bee or Asian Honey bee, i.e. a feral nest, including abandoned nests
- (d) Hive means a used receptacle for housing living bees
- (e) Apiary appliance means any apparatus or equipment, fitting, implement or utensil that has been used for beekeeping or processing, handling or storing an apiary product, including (without limitation) used beekeeping personal protective equipment
- (f) Apiary product means bee collected pollen, bee comb, comb sections, cut comb, honey dew, propolis, queen candy, beeswax, royal jelly and honey.

In this context, this movement control order applies to all of the above carriers.

3. The area to which the movement control order relates

This movement control order relates to the entire State of Queensland.

4. The prohibitions and restrictions that must be complied with by persons to whom this movement control order applies

A. A person within the area to which the movement control order relates must notify an inspector appointed under the Act about:

- (i) the presence of varroa mite

or

- (ii) if the person reasonably suspects the presence of varroa mite, the suspected presence of varroa mite.

B. A person must not move any of the carriers listed in section 2 of this movement control order into Queensland unless:

- (i) the carrier has originated from a State or Territory of Australia where there has been no reported detection of varroa mite by any relevant State or Territory authority responsible for any Act equivalent to the Act at the time the carrier is to be moved into Queensland; or
- (ii) if the carrier is transiting through the State of New South Wales to Queensland, is transported in sealed packages, or in the case of hives is **quarantine secured**, meaning the hives are transported while covered by tightly secured knitted fabric shade cloth (60% shade minimum), to prevent access by bees; or
- (iii) the carrier is processed honey or processed beeswax; or
- (iv) the carrier is a new and unused Apiary appliance; or
- (v) the carrier is a quarantine secured diagnostic honey sample for testing at a recognised diagnostic facility.

For the purposes of this movement control order:

- a) **processed honey** means honey that has been extracted, filtered, or strained or settled to remove wax cappings and dead bees, and decanted into a *clean container movement system* in a facility and in a manner that excludes bees
- b) a **clean container movement system** means there is no external contamination with an apiary product (including honey and beeswax) to the outside of the container, or any outer protective framing, or pallets and the containers are transported in a manner that excludes bees
- c) **processed beeswax** means beeswax that has undergone melting, filtering (to remove bees, brood and debris) and rendering treatment and is packed into clean containers and packaged in a facility and in a manner that excludes bees
- d) a **new and unused Apiary appliance** means any apparatus or equipment, fitting, implement or utensil that remain in original packaging and have not been in contact with bees, or in contact with apiary products and packaged in a facility and in a manner that excludes bees
- e) a **quarantine secured diagnostic honey sample** means:
 - (i) the sample is sealed within the following three layers of packaging to prevent the escape of the sample or any biosecurity matter—
 - a. an inner layer of paper, cardboard or plastic that is sealed;
 - b. a middle layer that is a strong plastic bag and is sealed and labelled “Quarantine Material—Do Not Open”; and
 - c. an outer layer that is a sealed box or other sealed container.
- f) a **recognised diagnostic facility** means,
 - (i) the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries Chemical Residue Laboratory, Coopers Plains - Health and Food Sciences Precinct - Block 10, 39 Kessels Road, Coopers Plains QLD 4108; or
 - (ii) the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries Biosecurity Sciences Laboratory, Coopers Plains - Health and Food Sciences Precinct - Block 12, 39 Kessels Road, Coopers Plains QLD 4108; or
 - (iii) the School of Science, Technology and Engineering, the University of the Sunshine Coast, 90 Sippy Downs Drive, Queensland 4556.

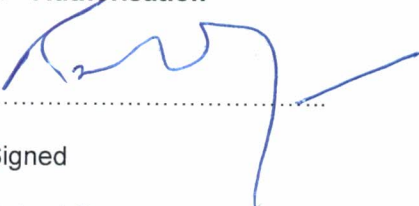
5. Period of the order

The movement control order takes effect when it is published on the department’s website and will stay in force for three months unless earlier revoked.

6. Revocation of previous movement control order

This movement control order replaces the movement control order relating to varroa mite that was signed on 30 June 2022 and commenced on 30 June 2022 (the Previous MCO). Accordingly, pursuant to section 124 of the Act, I revoke the Previous MCO with effect from commencement of this movement control order.

7. Authorisation



Signed

Robert Gee
 Director-General
 Department of Agriculture and Fisheries


 Date of Authorisation