



The official newsletter of the Far North Coast Beekeepers Inc. Est. 2020

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American Foulbrood

Editor Jenna Vos

A notifiable disease? Yes, it is a notifiable disease under the NSW Biosecurity Act 2015. There is a persistent low level of infection occurring amongst the apiaries in NSW.

So what are we looking for?; American Foulbrood (AFB) is a fatal microbial disease of the honey bee brood (*Apis mellifera* ssp). It is caused by the gram negative **spore-forming bacterium - *Paenibacillus larvae*** and introduced by nurse bees feeding spore contaminated pollen and/or nectar to bee larvae. The bacterial infection proliferates (vegetative state) in the gut of the bee larvae causing the bee larvae to decompose into a “gooey mass” and forming AFB scale (spore state). The final black dried out mass (approximately a month later) can contain 2.5 million spores. It only takes 35 spores to infect a larva. The resultant spores are spread by worker bees’ (vector) mouth parts cleaning out the infected cells. Adult bees are not affected by the bacteria. This bacterium has been known to affect honey bees for hundreds of years.

How is it spread? AFB can be introduced to the hive by drifting bees from a nearby infected colony (within a 3.2 to 5km radius), infected bee equipment/tools, contaminated beekeepers ie. clothes, gloves, hive tools, non sterilised pollen patties and robbing of contaminated honey. AFB spores can lie dormant in infected bee equipment for 50 years or more.

How to know if your hive is infected? A first indication can be sunken, darkened and greasy looking, perforated brood cappings. Irregular brood patterns tend to manifest in advanced stages of the disease. A common test is to insert a matchstick into the dead brood cell and if a sticky ropery mess is drawn out, AFB could be present....continued page 3.

Covid-19 Regulations and Restrictions

Please practice physical distancing when attending any gathering and abide by the most recent advice given by Australian Government Health www.health.gov.au

Date Savers

Tues 23rd Jan 2021 18h00 Committee meeting Casino RSL.

Sun 14th March 2021 8h30 for 9h00 start -12h00 Field Day to be hosted by Suzy Deyris, 7 Stanger Road, Stony Chute NSW 2480.

Focus: “Sugar shake” for Varroa mite, a potential Biosecurity risk for Honey bees.

What to bring: A veil and protective gear for viewing the apiary - all other bee gear will be provided, your own chair and cup and something to share – two gazebos, two tables and an urn will be provided with tea, coffee milk and sugar. A Portaloo will also be onsite.

Presidents Report by Peter Laughton

Even with the wet weather we are having, the field bees have been out and about foraging. The second flowering of clover prior to Xmas yielded a lovely, smooth, clear honey. So too the second flowering of the bottle brushes in my area here, West of Casino. Swarming has also been very prevalent this season. I have witnessed at least two or three swarmings of one hive even with split management.

Bee good

Peter

Far North Coast Club news

From our Secretary, Stephen Fowler

The club would like to thank Robert Butler for allowing us to view his apiary located amongst the hills on a farm north west of Lismore. We would also like to thank those experienced members who demonstrated their valuable skills and sharing of information on inspecting brood, demonstrating how to split hives and housing new queens in subsequent splits and original hives. This method of learning seems to be more valuable than watching a video or reading a book. The club purchased two queens and donated these on the day to be used as a demonstration of how to insert queens in a hive. Thank you all as well for your tea contribution, they were greatly appreciated.

For this coming month of **March Field Day**, we will demonstrate how to use the **sugar shake** method to determine the possible presence of Varroa Mite (**Varroa destructor and V. jacobsonia**), a potential Biosecurity risk. The **Dept. of Primary Industries** require all beekeepers, hobby and professional, to complete this screening of their bee hives. Please read up on this type of infestation online at [www. BeeAware](http://www.BeeAware) or your Biosecurity Manual and bring your questions to the meeting.

Due to the reduction in Covid Restrictions the committee has decided to recommence **General meetings** to be held at a venue to be decided every alternate month prior to our **Information Evenings** Thirty minutes will be allocated to the meeting. An agenda will be sent out to members by email prior to the meeting. The **Information Evenings** will host many topics of beekeeping interest eg, hive construction, honey extraction, disease control, wax rendering and various other subsidiary activities. The committee also agreed to allow **any member to advertise their equipment only** on a notice board to be provided at these information evenings.

We would like to remind members that we are still looking for additional committee members to help with the running of the club. A Vice President would be a great place to start
Stephen

Far North Coast Beekeepers Inc Committee

President	Peter Laughton	+61 491 609 416	farnorthcoast.president@beekeepers.asn.au
Vice President	<i>To be nominated</i>		
Secretary	Stephen Fowler	+61 418 412 621	farnorthcoast.secretary@beekeepers.asn.au
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Biosecurity Officer	Robert Stone		farnorthcoast.biosecurity@beekeepers.asn.au
Membership	Robert Butler	+61 414 667 036	farnorthcoast.membership@beekeepers.asn.au
Committee Members	<i>To be nominated (3)</i>		

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What can you do? It is recommended you do a minimum of two hive inspections a year especially in Spring and Autumn (hobbyist and professionals) and report your results to the **NSW DPI** if an infection is found. Have ready two laboratory slides (obtainable from a chemist) per hive ready in the event you are not able to discern **AFB** and /or the difference between **EFB (European Foul Brood)** and **AFB** to send to the laboratory for analysis.

What to do once diagnosis is confirmed: Firstly, the hive needs to be destroyed. Once all the bees have returned to the hive of an evening and closed up, an open metal/ceramic container of petrol can be placed on the top of the frames. The fumes of the petrol will asphyxiate the bees.

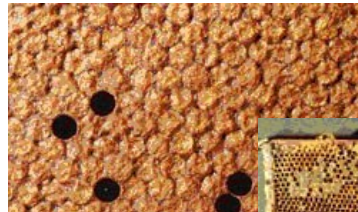
Secondly, all infected materials are either to be **burnt** and/or **gamma irradiated**. If you choose to burn all your equipment (hive boxes, frames with honey, foundation and brood, bottom and top boards and queen excluder plus dead bees) you need to dig a pit so that the remaining ashes (melted wax in particular) can be covered by 30cm of soil. All wooden, scored plastic, galvanised surfaces are porous and a potential host to AFB spores. AFB spores are resistant to extreme heat and cold. Freezing is ineffective.

Alternatively you can **burn the brood frames and dead bees**, extract the honey from the super frames (make sure it is your last extraction of the day in a stainless steel extractor that can be washed out with clean soapy water), bundle up all the equipment in a double layer of sealed **strong black plastic** and send it to **Steritech** for **gamma irradiation**. If you, a member, have AFB and have decided to use gamma irradiation, please contact **Stephen Fowler** at **0420 358 122** at **Northern Rivers Beekeeping Supplies** at 5 Robb St., Russelton Estate, Alstonville NSW 2477. for assistance.

Footnote:

All information has been sourced from "Biosecurity Manual for Beekeepers" Ver1.1 Jan 2016, Be Aware www.beaware.org.au, NSW Dept of Primary Industries www.dpi.nsw.gov.au "AG Guide Healthy Bees" handbook, Robert Owen's "The Australian Beekeeping Manual" 2015, Stephen Fowler's AFB requirements for Steritech and other internet sites discussing AFB.

Here are some photos of a perfect swarm, a split being made on the field day plus a healthy brood vs an unhealthy brood pattern.



Notes from the Editor:

If there is any subject matter you would like to see in the newsletter please contact us on email. I would love some feedback regarding form and subject matter.

Hosting a Field Day

We would love to visit your yard and/or apiary for one of our field days. Please get in touch with the Secretary Stephen Fowler to discuss details and dates.

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