

Dear Beekeepers,

Following our previous communications, we are writing to you to further explain the process of reporting Varroa in Scotland.

Background:

The Bee Diseases and Pest Control (Scotland) Amendment Order 2021 making Varroa reportable in Scotland and which amends **The Bees Diseases and Pest Control (Scotland) Order 2007** comes into force on 21st April 2021 (*similar arrangements are in place for England and Wales*). This legislation requires all beekeepers and officials in Great Britain to report the presence of Varroa in any of the hives that they manage or inspect (in the case of bee inspectors) and will allow GB to comply with the Animal Health Law which is necessary for future working relationships with the European Union and for GB beekeepers to continue to export honey queen bees to the EU and Northern Ireland.

Although Varroa is known to be widespread in the UK, there are small pockets in very remote areas of Scotland which are thought to be free of Varroa (*like the Isle of Colonsay*), however only the Isle of Man is officially Varroa-free in the UK.

SASA has been working on a mapping exercise of areas currently free of Varroa and data will be published in due course.

Varroa continues to be one of the most serious pests faced by beekeepers around the world. *Scotland's Bee Health Improvement Partnership (BHIP) see this move as a positive opportunity that ties up with the recently established Varroa Working Group chaired by Matthew Richardson, Bee Health and Science Officer of the Scottish Beekeepers' Association (SBA). The data that we gather by making the presence of Varroa mites reportable by beekeepers will provide us with an opportunity to inform future policy, strategic decisions on controls of Varroa and reduce its incidence as well as its spread into those precious areas currently free.* We are also working with Graeme Sharpe, from the Scottish Rural Colleague on the development of a new Varroa training package specifically aimed at Scottish Beekeepers.

BeeBase:

Reporting of Varroa in GB will be possible through the beekeeper's own record in BeeBase <https://www.nationalbeeunit.com/>

BeeBase is the National Bee Unit website, it has therefore a heavy slant on English and Welsh beekeepers. We have started to work with the NBU colleagues on improving the content to reflect the Scottish Beekeeping community needs.

We strongly encourage all beekeepers in Scotland to register in BeeBase. It is free and completely safe. Your apiaries and details are not visible to any other beekeeper.

Knowing the distribution of beekeepers and their apiaries across the country helps us to effectively monitor and control the spread of serious honey bee pests and diseases, as well as provide up-to-date information in keeping bees healthy and productive. By telling us who you are you'll be playing a very important part in helping to maintain and sustain honey bees for the future. The system will alert you if we find disease within 5 km of your apiaries and will alert us to get in touch with you. We cannot help you if we do not know who you are or where you have your bees! If you have any concerns with the use of BeeBase, please get in touch with us at any point and we will be glad to put your mind at ease.

If anyone has any issues with logging in or registering in BeeBase, please get in touch with our business support team on Bees_mailbox@gov.scot. Our friendly colleagues Rose, Carol, Jackie and Erica will be delighted to help you.

Reporting Varroa in Scotland:

We have waited for the National Bee Unit to create the functionality in BeeBase before we got in touch with you all. The functionality is now live and reporting of Varroa is a legal requirement from the 21st of April 2021.

Reporting of Varroa will be at apiary level. The requirement is to report presence of Varroa in any colony, so if seen in a colony, the apiary is considered as positive for Varroa. If you are unsure whether Varroa is present in your colonies and do not have assistance through your association, SASA can provide diagnostic support to Scottish beekeepers. More information can be found on [their website below](#)

<https://www.sasa.gov.uk/wildlife-environment/bee-health/varroa>

Note that SASA's resources are limited so please use this service wisely.

The National Bee Unit has defaulted all registered beekeepers to having Varroa in their colonies. Therefore:

- If you have Varroa in your apiaries: Your record in BeeBase is already updated. Please just check that your details are correct and your apiary locations are up to date.
- If your apiaries are free of Varroa: Please go onto your record on BeeBase and change the Varroa status of your apiary.

You can do this by:

1. accessing "my apiaries" section.

My records

Search

My Personal Details

My Apiaries

Import notifications

eLearning

« Back to public pages

RSS - News Feed

2. "edit" each apiary.

Options
<input type="button" value="Edit apiary"/>
<input type="button" value="View history"/>
<input type="button" value="Delete this apiary"/>

3. Check your Varroa status:

Varroa present?	Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> <input type="button" value="i"/> (Mandatory field)
Number of your colonies in apiary	<input type="text" value="4"/> (Mandatory field)
If you have experienced severe losses please contact your Bee Inspector to advise.	

4. You will also notice that there is now a new functionality to use a map for positioning your apiary, it will produce the map coordinates and post code automatically.

New beekeepers registering in BeeBase will be asked to declare if they have Varroa or not on each apiary as a requirement for registration.

Although we strongly encourage registration on BeeBase, it is not compulsory, so those who wish to report Varroa but do not wish to register on BeeBase can do so by emailing us on Bees_mailbox@gov.scot

We are grateful for your assistance with this and as always, if you have any questions or wish to discuss, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us through our mailbox: Bees_mailbox@gov.scot

Additional background information:

- *The change on making Varroa reportable is due to GB now having a third country trading relationship with the EU. Article 6 of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/692 will apply within the EU from 21 April 2021 and require that consignments of animals, germinal products and products of animal origin shall only be permitted to enter the Union from a third country or territory where diseases listed in Annex I are required by law to be notified and reported to the competent authority. For consignments of bees, Infestation with Varroa mites (Varroosis) is one of the listed diseases in Annex I to Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/692 (as it is referred to in Article 5 of Regulation (EU) 2016/429 (“the Animal Health Law”) and listed in Annex II.*
- *You can see the whole instrument here: [The Bee Diseases and Pests Control \(Scotland\) Amendment Order 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2021/91/article/2/made)
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2021/91/article/2/made>
but I would strongly encourage you all to also read the policy note which explains further in depth the reasoning for this move, here: [The Bee Diseases and Pests Control \(Scotland\) Amendment Order 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2021/91/pdfs/ssipn_20210091_en.pdf)
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2021/91/pdfs/ssipn_20210091_en.pdf*

With kind regards
Scottish Government Honey Bee Health Team
April 2021