

T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Dear beekeeper,

In Scotland we take immense pride in our natural habitat and its assets. Scottish honey and bee hive products sourced from our abundant flora, and particularly from heather in the Scottish moorlands and highlands, is one of those assets of which we are justifiably proud. These high quality products and their reputation are dependent upon having a healthy population of honey bees and your responsible behaviour as beekeepers.

Scottish Government takes the health of our honey bee population extremely seriously and has a dedicated Bee Health Team to support the beekeeping sector through the implementation of our [Bee Health Implementation Plan](#). One of the ways we ensure a healthy honey bee population in Scotland is by regular inspections of apiaries for the presence of diseases and pests by a team of Bee Health Inspectors.

Two of these diseases, American Foulbrood (AFB) and European Foulbrood (EFB) are extremely detrimental to the health of the hive and can be highly infectious to neighbouring apiaries.

Unfortunately, this year Scotland has had an unprecedented number of both AFB and EFB outbreaks.

This is not only bad news for beekeepers, it's bad news for consumers as we know that the Scottish public want to support our honey bees and to be able to trust that the products they buy come from healthy hives.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot

There are a number of things you can do as a responsible keeper to help maintain the health and well-being of our honeybees, including:

- **Register and keep the locations of your apiaries up to date on BeeBase:** Unregistered apiaries, if infected, can act as a source of disease spread to other beekeepers. Registration allows the Scottish Government Bee Health Team to assess if there is a risk of disease spreading to your bees, to contact you directly to alert you when disease is present nearby so you can increase your monitoring and to arrange to inspect your apiaries if necessary. Registration to BeeBase is free and available at the [National Bee Unit website](#); Your data is completely confidential and only visible to the SG Bee Health Team and the NBU. It will not be used for any other purpose than for bee health.
- **Acquaint yourselves with the symptoms of [foulbrood diseases](#) and how to conduct a full foulbrood inspection.** Foulbrood inspections should be carried out at least once a year, but more regular inspections are encouraged in the areas where disease has been confirmed;
- **Report any suspicion of disease** to the [Bee Health Team](#). AFB and EFB are notifiable diseases and you have a legal obligation to report these if you suspect their presence.
- **Maintain strict biosecurity measures and hygiene procedures**, as these are two key actions you can take to prevent the outbreak and spread of disease. Old and second-hand equipment is often the main source of spread of disease, and should be thoroughly cleansed and sterilised before re-utilising;
- **Isolate swarms of unknown origins** in a quarantine apiary and inspect for signs of disease before they are brought into contact with other colonies.

I would urge you to do all of these - if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Bee Health Team at: [Bees Mailbox@gov.scot](mailto:Bees.Mailbox@gov.scot)

There are no approved medicinal products for the treatment of EFB or AFB. If using **medicines for Varroa** control you must:

- only use Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) approved products and use them only according to the manufacturer instructions
- keep a record of any product used for a period of at least five years.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE™
We invest in people Silver



Misuse of authorised medicines and/or use of unauthorised substances or homemade remedies can have health consequences for you as a beekeeper, and it could have serious consequences for public health through residues in honey, putting at risk the reputation of Scottish beekeeping. It can also create Varroa mite resistance. Please ensure that you adhere to the guidance set by the VMD.

For further information about approved medicines, please visit the VMD website at: [Product Information Database - Home \(defra.gov.uk\)](https://www.defra.gov.uk/product-information-database). And if you are unsure about any of the above or have any questions, please visit contact the Bee Health Team as above.

Thank you for playing your part to ensure we achieve a healthy and sustainable population of honey bees in Scotland.

Yours sincerely,



GILLIAN MARTIN

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE™
We invest in people Silver

