

AUSTRALIAN HONEY BEE INDUSTRY COUNCIL INC

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APIS CERANA AND VARROA JACOBSONI IN TOWNSVILLE – NO. 2

To date no further Asian bees, *Apis cerana*, have been found in Townsville.

Further examination of the original comb has revealed three (3) more *Varroa jacobsoni* in worker comb making five (5) in total.

The *V. jacobsoni* mites detected in Townsville are on Asian bees, *A. cerana*. It is currently believed that these forms of varroa mite do not readily transfer between host species – that is, if the mite is found on Asian bees, it does not readily move to European honey bees.

On Monday 4 July, 2016 a Movement Control Order for an area of 10kms around the Port of Townsville was issued.

The Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, QDAF, are in the final stages of preparing the Response Plan. This will be submitted to the Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests, CCEPP, this coming week.

The Queensland Beekeepers Association (QBA) President, Robert Dewar, and I will arrive in Townsville this coming Monday. The QBA conference is on Wednesday and Thursday and the AHBIC AGM is on Friday.

QDAF have organised a meeting for local beekeepers on Tuesday evening. This is what they have included in their invitation:-

Beekeepers are invited to attend an information session in Townsville on Tuesday night to hear the latest information about the varroa mite detection and response activities.

Biosecurity Queensland officers will provide details of surveillance activities underway, and how beekeepers can protect their hives from varroa mite and other biosecurity threats.

Industry representatives will also make presentations at the meeting.

Date and time: 12 July 2016, 6.30pm – 7.30pm

Venue: Mercure Townsville, 166 Woolcock Street

RSVP not required

Surveillance activities update

*Biosecurity Queensland is implementing a quarantine and surveillance program within a 10 km radius of the Townsville port after confirming detection of varroa mites (*Varroa jacobsoni*) in an Asian honey bee (*Apis cerana*) hive at the port.*

The hive has been destroyed and no further feral Asian honey bees or varroa mites have been detected to date.

Restrictions have been imposed on the movement of bees, bee hives, bee products (excluding honey), and used bee keeping equipment from the Townsville area to prevent any possible spread of the mite.

Officers are currently focusing their surveillance efforts within a 2 km radius around the site of the detection. Biosecurity Queensland is working with the Federal Government to conduct this surveillance.

A range of methods are being used to conduct the surveillance including sweep netting flowering plants and setting feeding stations to attract any foraging bees.

Biosecurity staff are also checking catch boxes and sentinel hives that are set permanently around the port as part of the National Bee Pest Surveillance Program.

The department will continue discussion through the National Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests to determine required ongoing response activities for the varroa mite.

It has previously been determined that Asian honey bees cannot be eradicated from Australia. While response activities are focused on eradicating any varroa mites, this will involve destroying any Asian honey bee nests that we find.

While Asian honey bees have been established in parts of Far North Queensland centred around Cairns for some years, varroa mites are not known to be present in this population.

Varroa mites are a serious pest and a threat to the local honey bee industry. Certain species and strains can infest European honey bees, killing off hives and severely affecting honey production and pollination services.

Asian honey bee are the natural host of this species of varroa mite.

If you know of feral bee hives in the Townsville area, or see Asian honey bees or suspect your bees have been affected, call the Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23.

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Further information will be sent out as it comes to hand.

Trevor Weatherhead
Executive Director
10 July, 2016