

Beekeepers – only bring healthy hives to almonds in Victoria

AGRICULTURE VICTORIA

The 2020 almond pollination season is fast approaching. Beekeepers planning on entering Victoria with hives from interstate must meet Victoria's entry requirements.

Almond pollination provides a cash flow opportunity for beekeeping businesses who have suffered from the effects of drought and fire over recent years.

While most interstate beekeepers do the right thing each year, beekeepers bringing diseased hives into Victoria for almond pollination have been fined up to \$5000.

To reduce the risk of disease at almond pollination, beekeepers planning on bringing hives into Victoria need to take the following steps:

1. Check to make sure you're compliant with 'the Code'

Most of the [Australian Honey Bee Industry Biosecurity Code of Practice](#) ('the Code') is now law in Victoria. Use the checklist below to make sure you're compliant:

- Check to make sure that your registration as a beekeeper is current and that your registered brand is clearly marked on all your hives.
- Ensure that all your hives are structurally sound, have intact external surfaces, and only have openings that are designed specifically for bee access.
- Inspect your brood regularly to check for pests and diseases. Remove any diseased or substandard hives from your

load before taking them to almond pollination.

- Test your hives for exotic parasites, such as [varroa mite](#), via [drone uncapping and either the sugar shake or alcohol wash methods](#).
- Communicate with your broker/grower with information about your apiaries, including your expectations of your available hive numbers and their quality.
- [Maintain records](#) of your inspections, tests, observations and actions (such as movement) as they relate to your hives.
- Complete your annual honey culture test. This is mandatory for beekeepers who own 50 or more hives. To order a test kit, contact Gribbles Veterinary Pathology on 1300 307 190.
- To demonstrate to your broker or grower that you are compliant with the Code, provide them with a completed and signed copy of the 'Certification of Compliance' document. It can be found at the back of [the Code](#).

2. Obtain a copy of a blank Victorian Health Certificate

- You will need a blank health certificate for the introduction of bees, bee products, fodder or used beekeeping fittings into Victoria. You can get one by either:
 - downloading it from: <https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/biosecurity/moving-livestock-and-animals/moving-bees-interstate>
 - sending an email to: honeybee.biosecurity@agriculture.vic.gov.au and requesting a blank

- health certificate; we'll email one back to you.
- o phoning our Customer Service Centre on 136 186 and asking to speak to an apiary officer. They will arrange for a certificate to be posted or faxed to you.

NOTE: Previous versions of health certificate forms are no longer in use. Please ensure you are using the current version from the Agriculture Victoria website for all movements into Victoria.

3. Complete Part A of the certificate 'Certification by Owner'

When bringing hives into Victoria for almond pollination, you need to state on the form the total number of bee colonies (i.e. hives) that you intend to bring in.

You must also declare (by signing the form) that your bee colonies are not coming from a quarantine area or from an apiary that is showing symptoms of American foul brood (AFB) or any other bee diseases.

If the hives are from an apiary of 50 or more hives, you must also attach the result of a honey culture test that is less than 12 months old.

4. Submit the form to your apiary officer

Once you've completed Part A of the form, you can submit it to an apiary officer in your state or territory. They will complete Part B of the form and return it to you. They may be in contact with you to request further information.

5. Bring your hives into Victoria

When both parts of the form have been completed, you can now bring your bees into Victoria.

When taking your bees into Victoria, you must:

- Keep a copy of the health certificate with you when you come into Victoria;
- Give a copy of the health certificate to your 'consignee' – this might be the broker or orchard you are delivering your bees to;
- Send a copy of the health certificate to a Victorian apiary officer within 48 hours of your arrival. You can do this by emailing it to honeybee.biosecurity@agriculture.vic.gov.au; or if you don't have access to email,

phone 136 186 and ask to speak to an apiary officer who will make other arrangements for you.

6. Enjoy your stay in Victoria

All beekeepers are responsible for assisting with maintaining biosecurity and controlling the spread of bee diseases. If everyone complies, the risk of disease is reduced and the whole beekeeping industry benefits.

Do yourself and the industry a favour and leave any weak or diseased hives at home.

For more information go to agriculture.vic.gov.au