

Aycliffe Beekeepers Association Apiary Protocol

1. OBJECTIVE

- 1.1 The purpose of this Protocol is to define the minimum standards that will be attained in the management of association and member owned colonies in the community apiary.
- 1.2 This protocol forms part of the Rules & Regulations of the association and may be amended or updated at an ABKA committee meeting.

2. MANAGEMENT

- 2.1 The association will appoint an Apiary Manager who will have overall authority.
- 2.2 The apiary and colonies will be maintained to a standard conducive for teaching, display and demonstrating purposes.
- 2.3 The Apiary Manager will organise the content of the Practical Sessions for new beekeepers and ensure continuity.
- 2.4 During the spring build up, suitable association colonies will be split to create nucleus colonies that can eventually be offered for sale to members.
- 2.5 New beekeepers that purchase bees from the association will be allowed to leave the colony in the apiary until the following spring. Such colonies will be managed the same as association owned colonies.
- 2.6 All hives will contain a Hive Record Sheet that will be completed following each inspection of the colony. The Hive Record Sheet will be affixed to the underside of the hive roof.
- 2.7 Member owned colonies will have the members contact details affixed to the underside of the hive roof.
- 2.8 Problems that require immediate action that are revealed during inspection of a colony by tutors or demonstrators will be notified to the Apiary Manager.
- 2.9 Unless a full Bailey Comb Change or a "shook swarm" is performed, a minimum of three brood frames will be changed annually in the association owned colonies.

3. CLEANLINESS & HYGENE

- 3.1 During colony inspections, any debris removed from a hive will be placed in receptacles provided for that purpose.
- 3.2 Any member, who brings their own beekeeping tools to the apiary, must sterilise their equipment in the soda solution provided before and after each apiary session.
- 3.3 The Apiary Manager will organise work parties as necessary to clear undergrowth and maintain the appearance of the apiary.

4. BEES

4.1 Only honeybees (*Apis mellifera mellifera*) of good temperament will be allowed to be kept in the apiary.

4.2 If the temperament of a colony changes adversely, then the colony will be re-queened with a queen from known stock. The technique for re-queening will be at the discretion of the Apiary Manager.

5. EQUIPMENT & ASSETS

5.1 Only standard deep or 14 x 12 National hives with open mesh floors of either wood or polystyrene construction will be used by the association.

5.2 Members who provide additional supers for use on association hives may harvest any honey from the super as their own.

5.3 The Apiary Manager will maintain an Asset Register of all apiary equipment belonging to the association.

5.4 The Asset Register will be held in a shared location to allow access by authorised members.

6. OVER WINTERING

6.1 Sufficient stores will be left with each colony to ensure their winter survival. If stores are insufficient, sugar syrup in 2:1 ratio will be fed to the bees during September to make up any shortfall.

6.2 If colonies have insufficient stores after October, then Fondant may be fed to prevent starvation.

7. INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT (IPM)

7.1 Every colony in the apiary will be treated for the Varroa Destructor mite using the following Integrated Pest Management plan -

7.1.1 Colonies will be treated in the autumn with an approved varroacide after surplus honey has been removed.

7.1.2 An additional treatment of oxalic acid solution will be administered at the rate of 5ml per seam of bees between late December and early January (this is subject to agreement).

7.1.3 When appropriate, sacrificial drone removal will be adopted.

7.1.4 Icing Sugar may be dusted over the bees during spring and summer.

8 APIARY VISITORS

8.1 When visitors are invited into the apiary, appropriate protective clothing will be provided to prevent accidental stings from bees.

8.2 Visitors will not be allowed entry into the apiary unless fully protected.

8.3 For school visits to the apiary, lessons and education will be conducted through the apiary screens unless full protective clothing is provided. Owing to the number of children in a school group, it will not be possible to provide protection for every child. Therefore, the number of children allowed into the apiary will be restricted.

9. HEALTH & SAFETY

9.1 Members will take all precautions to protect themselves from bee stings whilst in the community apiary.

9.2 Members who are likely to have allergic reactions to bee stings must make this known to the Apiary Manager whilst in the apiary.

9.3 For members who are likely have an allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) an EpiPen must be carried at all times whilst in the community apiary.

10. DISCLAIMER

10.1 Aycliffe Beekeepers will not be held responsible for any loss of bees or personal equipment from the association apiary, either accidental or theft, that belongs to a member of the association.