

Terrestrial Animal Health Standards
Commission Report

October 2008

CHAPTER 9.2.

AMERICAN FOUL BROOD OF HONEY BEES

Article 9.2.1.

General provisions

For the purposes of this Chapter, American foulbrood is a *disease* of the larval and pupal stages of the honey bee *Apis mellifera* and other *Apis* spp., and occurs in most countries where such bees are kept. *Paenibacillus larvae subsp. larvae*, the causative organism, is a bacterium that can produce over one billion spores in each infected larva. The spores are very long-living and extremely resistant to heat and chemical agents, and only the spores are capable of inducing the *disease*.

Combs of infected *apiaries* may show distinctive clinical signs which can allow the *disease* to be diagnosed in the field. However, subclinical *infections* are common and require *laboratory* diagnosis.

For the purposes of the *Terrestrial Code*, the *incubation period* for American foulbrood shall be 15 days (not including the wintering period which may vary according to country).

Standards for diagnostic tests are described in the *Terrestrial Manual*.

Article 9.2.2.

Determination of the American foulbrood status of a country or zone/compartment

The American foulbrood status of a country or *zone/compartment* (under study) can only be determined after considering the following criteria:

1. a *risk assessment* has been conducted, identifying all potential factors for American foulbrood occurrence and their historic perspective;
2. American foulbrood should be notifiable in the whole country or *zone/compartment* (under study) and all clinical signs suggestive of American foulbrood should be subjected to field and/or laboratory investigations;
3. an on-going awareness programme should be in place to encourage reporting of all cases suggestive of American foulbrood;
4. the *Veterinary Authority* or other *Competent Authority* with responsibility for the health reporting and control of diseases of honey bees should have current knowledge of, and authority over, all domesticated *apiaries* in the country.

Article 9.2.3.

Country or zone/compartiment (under study) free from American foulbrood1. Historically free status

A country or *zone/compartiment* (under study) may be considered free from the *disease* after conducting a *risk assessment* as referred to in Article 9.2.2. but without formally applying a specific *surveillance* programme if the country or *zone/compartiment* (under study) complies with the provisions of Chapter 1.4.

2. Free status as a result of an eradication programme

A country or *zone/compartiment* (under study) which does not meet the conditions of point 1 above may be considered free from American foulbrood after conducting a *risk assessment* as referred to in Article 9.2.2. and when:

- a) the *Veterinary Authority* or other *Competent Authority* with responsibility for ~~the health~~ reporting and control of diseases of honey bees has current knowledge of, and authority over, all domesticated *apiaries* existing in the country or *zone/compartiment* (under study);
- b) American foulbrood is notifiable in the whole country or *zone/compartiment* (under study), and any clinical cases suggestive of American foulbrood are subjected to field and/or *laboratory* investigations;
- c) for the 5 years following the last reported isolation of the American foulbrood agent, annual surveys supervised by the *Veterinary Authority*, with negative results, have been carried out on a representative sample of *apiaries* in the country or *zone/compartiment* (under study) to provide a confidence level of at least 95% of detecting American foulbrood if at least 1% of the *apiaries* were infected at a within-*apiary* prevalence rate of at least 5% of the hives; such surveys may be targeted towards areas with the last reported isolation of the American foulbrood agent;
- d) to maintain free status, an annual survey supervised by the *Veterinary Authority*, with negative results, is carried out on a representative sample of hives in the country or *zone/compartiment* (under study) to indicate that there has been no new isolations; such surveys may be targeted towards areas with a higher likelihood of isolation;
- e) (under study) there is no self-sustaining feral population of *A. mellifera* or other possible host species in the country or *zone/compartiment* (under study);
- f) all equipment associated with previously infected *apiaries* has been sterilised or destroyed;
- g) the importation of the *commodities* listed in this Chapter into the country or *zone/compartiment* (under study) is carried out in conformity with the recommendations of this Chapter.

Article 9.2.4.

Recommendations on safe commodities

Regardless of the American foulbrood status of the *exporting country*, *Veterinary Authorities* should authorise without restriction the import or transit through their territory of honey bee semen and honey bee venom.

Article 9.2.5.

Recommendations for the importation of live queen honey bees, worker bees and drones with or without associated brood combs

Veterinary Authorities of *importing countries* should require the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the bees come from a country or *zone/compartment* (under study) officially free from American foulbrood.

Article 9.2.6.

Recommendations for the importation of eggs, larvae and pupae of honey bees

Veterinary Authorities of *importing countries* should require the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the products:

1. were sourced from a free country or *zone/compartment* (under study); or
2. have been isolated from queens in a *quarantine station*.

Article 9.2.7.

Recommendations for the importation of used equipment associated with beekeeping

Veterinary Authorities of *importing countries* should require the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the equipment was sterilised under the supervision of the *Veterinary Authority* by either immersion in 1% sodium hypochlorite for at least 30 minutes (suitable only for non-porous materials such as plastic and metal), gamma irradiation using a cobalt-60 source at a dose rate of 10 kGy, or processing to ensure the destruction of both bacillary and spore forms of *P. larvae larvae*, in conformity with one of the procedures referred to in Chapter X.X. (under study).

Article 9.2.8.

Recommendations for the importation of honey, honey bee-collected pollen, beeswax, propolis and royal jelly

Veterinary Authorities of *importing countries* officially free from American foulbrood should require the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the products:

1. were collected in a country or *zone/compartment* (under study) free from American foulbrood; or
2. have been processed to ensure the destruction of both bacillary and spore forms of *P. larvae larvae*, in conformity with one of the procedures referred to in Chapter X.X. (under study).