

# Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission Report

October 2008

## CHAPTER 9.3.

### EUROPEAN FOULBROOD OF HONEY BEES

#### Article 9.3.1.

##### General provisions

For the purposes of this Chapter, European 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. The causative agent is the non-sporulating bacterium *Melissococcus pluton*. Subclinical *infections* are common and require *laboratory* diagnosis. *Infection* remains enzootic because of mechanical contamination of the honeycombs. Recurrences of *disease* can therefore be expected in subsequent years.

For the purposes of the *Terrestrial Code*, the *incubation period* for European 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 9.3.2.

##### Determination of the European foulbrood status of a country or zone/compartment

The European 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 European foulbrood occurrence and their historic perspective;
2. European foulbrood should be notifiable in the whole country or *zone/compartment* (under study) and all clinical signs suggestive of European foulbrood should be subjected to field and *laboratory* investigations;
3. an on-going awareness programme should be in place to encourage reporting of all cases suggestive of European 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 *apiaries* in the whole country.

## Article 9.3.3.

**Country or zone/compartiment (under study) free from European foulbrood**1. Historically free status

A country or *zone / compartment* (under study) may be considered free from the *disease* after conducting a *risk assessment* as referred to in Article 9.3.2. 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 European foulbrood after conducting a *risk assessment* as referred to in Article 9.3.2. 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) European foulbrood is notifiable in the whole country or *zone/compartiment* (under study), and any clinical cases suggestive of European foulbrood are subjected to field and *laboratory* investigations;
- c) for the 3 years following the last reported isolation of the European foulbrood agent, an annual survey 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 European 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 European 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) 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 9.3.4.

**Recommendations on safe commodities**

Regardless of the European 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 9.3.5.

**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) free from European foulbrood.

## Article 9.3.6.

**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*, and all workers which accompanied the queen or a representative sample of eggs or larvae were examined for the presence of *Melissococcus pluton* by bacterial culture or PCR.

## Article 9.3.7.

**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 0.5% sodium hypochlorite for at least 20 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 *Melissococcus pluton*, in conformity with one of the procedures referred to in Chapter X.X. (under study).

## Article 9.3.8.

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

*Veterinary Authorities* of *importing countries* 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 European foulbrood; or
2. have been processed to ensure the destruction of *Melissococcus pluton*, in conformity with one of the procedures referred to in Chapter X.X. (under study).