

Varroa mite – where are we at?

Melinda Simpson, Industry Development Officer, NSW DPI

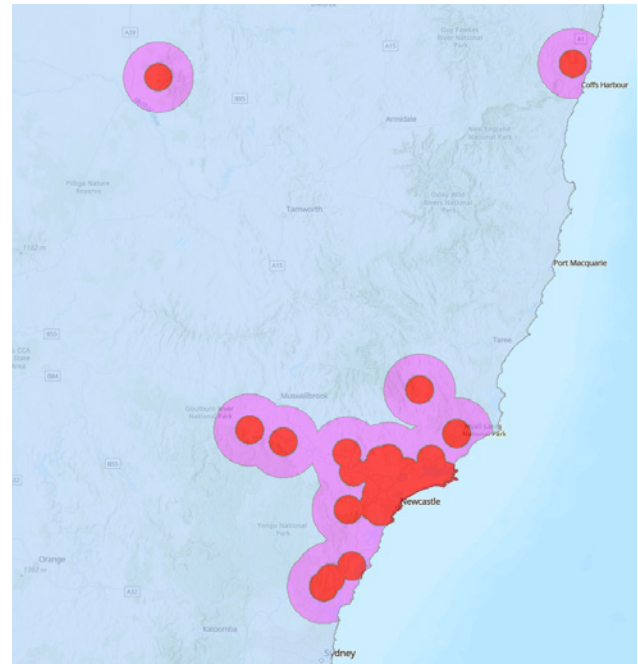
On 22 June 2022 *Varroa destructor* (Varroa mite) was detected in two of six sentinel hives at the Port of Newcastle in NSW, as a result of routine surveillance. All six hives were euthanised and inspected for mites. Three private hives in the vicinity of the sentinel hives were also euthanised.

Since the initial detection, other infected hives have been found through surveillance and tracing, and at the time of writing there are 103 infected premises in NSW. All confirmed cases, however, have clear links to the original detections through hive movement, or are geographically related. That said, the most recent infested premises (24 November) extends the boundary of the eradication zone as it was found in the surveillance zone in the Newcastle/Hunter area. Industry and government representatives are still confident Varroa mite can be eradicated at this stage, although there are ongoing conversations about costs.

All hives in the original eradication emergency zones areas have been euthanised and euthanasia operations continue in the remainder of the Newcastle/Hunter emergency zone areas.

The situation is changing rapidly, and information is constantly being updated on the NSW DPI website www.bit.ly/VM-NSW This is the best place to find information about, and apply for, Emergency Permits and Hive Movement Declarations to allow hive movement.

Growers using pollination services under the Hive Movement Declaration system must ensure that the commercial beekeepers they are using have the appropriate permits in place, as there are hefty fines for both the beekeepers and the growers if this procedure is not followed.



Varroa mite emergency zone map. Photo credit: NSW DPI

Nana Glen Wild European Honey Bee Management Plan

Following on from the euthanasia and destruction of recreational and commercially managed hives within the Nana Glen Varroa mite Eradication Emergency Zone, the next phase in the eradication of Varroa mite requires the complete removal of wild European honey bees from the Varroa mite Eradication Emergency Zone.

Euthanasia of wild European honey bees will be completed using a commonly available insecticide called Fipronil. Fipronil bait stations will be located and operated by NSW DPI within the 10-kilometre zone around each of the premises where Varroa mite was detected (the Varroa mite red eradication emergency zone).



MOONDARRA BLUEBERRIES

To ensure the safety of people, animals, livestock and the environment this work is strictly controlled by NSW DPI, in accordance with an Australian Pesticide and Veterinary Medicines Authority permit [PER84929]. The Fipronil bait stations are designed to exclude other animals and insects, and to prevent contamination of soil and water. While the bait stations are in active use the baited area will be supervised by trained staff.

Rollout of the plan – Nana Glen

The bait stations in the Nana Glen area will be operational from late October for approximately 6 months. NSW DPI have notified registered beekeepers within proximity to where bait stations will be deployed and have directly contacted landholders where bait stations are being installed.

As per the Biosecurity Act 2015, landholders are required to allow property entry to authorised biosecurity officers to place Fipronil baits in the red eradication emergency zone if requested to do so. There will be at minimum a 2km buffer area between bait stations and the purple surveillance emergency zone, to reduce the risk of European honey bees from outside the eradication zone interacting with the bait stations.

What actions do people need to take?

All bait stations will be clearly marked with signage as per the requirements of the APVMA permit, including instructions for persons to not tamper with bait station equipment.

We encourage people to help protect Australia's food security by contacting NSW DPI if they see European honey bee hives in the Varroa mite red eradication emergency zone at any time over the next 12 months.

Call the Biosecurity Helpline
1800 680 244 or complete the
online form found at
www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/varroa



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