

National Bee Pest Surveillance Program (NBSP) steering committee

Pest Risk Assessment – Asian Hornets

Department of Agriculture Water and the Environment (DAWE) undertook a risk assessment of the Giant Asian hornet and Asian hornet in early 2021. It was identified that the likely entry pathway of these pests into Australia is through overwintering egg laden female which are hitchhiking on imported goods. It was acknowledged that its pathway is similar to brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB) entry, and as a result much of the risk mitigation and inspection process implemented for BMSB will eliminate the risks of these hornets entering the country. DAWE highlighted that the interceptions of these hornets at our ports have been low.

DAWE further emphasised that raising awareness on these hornets is important in ensuring early detection of this exotic by the public. The Steering Committee will investigate possible options in raising the awareness among port workers to reduce the risk of these pests entry through our ports.

For more information on exotic pests including the hornet visit: beeaware.org.au/pest_category/exotic-pests/

Surveillance activities

All state and territories continue to deliver exotic bee pest and pest bee surveillance activities under the NBSP to achieve its goals. The National Varroa Mite Eradication Program (NVMEP) has concluded in Townsville, however, NBSP related activities will continue in Townsville for the remainder of this year

The NT government reported positive experiences with the trialling of rainbow bird-eater pellet analysis to complement bee surveillance activities. The results indicate that the bird-eater pellet technology could be successfully used for the early detection of pest bees.

28 remote catchboxes have been positioned in suitable – high risk – locations throughout Australia over eight months. These remote catchboxes have been incorporated with technologies that could capture and analyse images taken in real time to identify bees and generate alert to apiary officers of if new detections. These technologies were developed through a project funded by DAWE.

Asian honey bees or other exotic bees and bee pests have not been detected in this reporting period, however several European honey bee wings were collected from bird-eater pellets.

The future NBSP

The current NBSP will end in December 2021, and discussions continue with industry and government regarding continued support and the design for the next NBSP.

Acaricide permits

While still ensuring surveillance outcomes are met, the Committee continues to oversee and ensure there are clear and concise Conditions of Use, acaricide residue honey testing requirements, and appropriate management of extracted honey outlined in relevant acaricide permits and NBSP operating procedures.

The Committee

The Committee includes representatives from the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE), all state and territory governments, the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC), Plant Health Australia (PHA) and Hort Innovation and plays a role in overseeing and guiding support in the delivery of the National Bee Pest Surveillance Program (NBSP).

For more information about the NBSP visit planthealthaustralia.com.au/national-programs/national-bee-pest-surveillance-program/

The NBSP Steering Committee will meet again in November 2021.