National Bee Unit

Bee medicines

Animal & Plant Health Agency

Due care must be taken with anything introduced into a colony in order to prevent contamination of products which may be intended for human consumption. There are many products which are sold via beekeeping manufacturers to control pests and diseases, however, not all of these are legal because they have not gone through approval regulations set out by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD). This sheet intends to offer some basic guidance about what products are approved

What are 'approved medicines'?

In the UK, there are a number of treatments available 'over the counter'. However, not all of these will have gone through a registration process to ensure that they are safe to the user, colony and environment. At the time of writing the following are the only approved medicines for use with honeybees in the UK:

Name of Treatment	Active Ingredients	For the control of
Apiguard	*Thymol*	*Varroa*
Apilife-VAR	*Thymol, and essential oils*	*Varroa*
Apistan*	*Tau fluvalinate*	*Varroa*
Api-Bioxal	*Oxalic acid*	*Varroa*
Bayvarol *	*Flumethrin*	*Varroa*
Thymovar	*Thymol*	*Varroa*
Mite Away Quick Strips	*Formic acid*	*Varroa*

Resistance to these products has been confirmed in the U.K.

An up to date list can be found at: http://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/ProductInformationDatabase/Search.aspx

Changes to medicine approvals

Fumidil B is no longer authorised in the UK for the treatment of *Nosema spp*.

Can I use products that are available in Europe and elsewhere?

Where UK approved products are ineffective or unsuitable a Veterinary Surgeon can prescribe, using the Cascade principal, products approved elsewhere in the EU. This is particularly useful for winter treatments where no UK authorised treatment exists. In such cases the Cascade system can be used to import, for example, a registered oxalic acid treatment from Italy or Spain to control overwintering *Varroa* populations. This system requires an import license which has to be obtained by a veterinary surgeon.

Can I use generic natural substances to treat my colonies?

Anything which is placed in a hive to control or eradicate a pest or disease is classed as a medicine and must be registered under the Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2013. Therefore, homemade concoctions or any product which is not registered in the UK or elsewhere in Europe should not be used.

What is the situation with hive cleansers?

There are certain products on the market that are labelled as hive sanitizers, cleaners or similar wording. Cleaning and sanitisation products should be used strictly for the cleaning of hives and should not be applied directly to the bees, but rather to the hive or hive equipment. In the majority of cases, these products are not authorised as veterinary medicinal products within the UK and therefore no formal testing for quality, efficacy and safety of the product may have taken place.

Therefore, there is a danger they might be ineffective and harmful to bees, the beekeeper and the environment.

What records should I keep?

Current legislation requires that you keep a record of the purchase, use and disposal of any honeybee medicines. Attached to this FAQ is a record sheet, which meets all record keeping requirements laid down in Veterinary Medicines Legislation. You may however wish to incorporate it into your apiary records so make sure you record all the listed mandatory requirements. Records should be kept them for at least five years.

This form is also available as a pdf at www.nationalbeeunit.com

No mention of a treatment should be taken as an endorsement of efficacy, safety or a recommendation to treat.
Do not use homemade concoctions.

National Bee Unit
APHA, National Agri-Food Innovation Campus
Sand Hutton, York. YO41 1LZ
Telephone 03003030094 email nbuoffice@apha.gsi.gov.uk NBU Web site: www.nationalbeeunit.com
March 2016

VETERINARY MEDICINE ADMINISTRATION RECORD – TO BE KEPT FOR AT LEAST 5 YEARS

NAME AND FULL ADDRESS OF PERSON KEEPING RECORD	NAME:	*NBU ID No:*
ADDRESS: POSTCODE:	*TEL NO:*	
	E MAIL:	APIARY NAME / MAP REFERENCE:

TO BE COMPLETED AT TIME OF PURCHASE						**TO BE COMPLETED AT TIME OF ADMINISTRATION**							
Name and Address of Supplier of Medicinal Product	Date Purchased	Identity and Quantity of Medicinal Product				Date of Administration	Identification of Animal or Batch of Animals Treated		*Date treatment finished*	*Date withdrawal period ended*	Name of person administering veterinary medicine	Total quantity of veterinary medicine used	Date, quantity & route of disposal if not administered
		Name	Batch No	Quantity	Withdrawal Period		ID	*Number Treated*					

NB:

- **Columns headed in italics relate to information which is NOT a statutory requirement but will assist to meet some Farm Assurance Scheme requirements**.
- Proof of Purchase of all veterinary medicinal products must be kept.

These are general guidance notes only, and cannot be taken as an authoritative view of the law – further information can be obtained from Veterinary Medicines Directorate. Woodham Lane, New Haw, Addlestone, Surrey. KT15.3LS. Telephone: 01932 336911. www.vmd.defra.gov.uk