

## Varroa is now a Reportable Disease.

Varroosis is the disease caused by the infestation of Varroa mites species, an ectoparasite of honey bees, it is now an endemic disease in the UK and present in most honey bee colonies. Until 21<sup>st</sup> April 2021, Varroosis was not a reportable or Notifiable disease in the UK.

The European Parliament agreed to make Varroosis a Reportable disease in the EU.

Under the powers conferred by Section 1 of the Bees Act 1980 and subsequent orders. The latest being The Bees Diseases and Pests Control (England) Order 2006, the UK government decided it is in the best interests of the UK to align with EU regulations even though the parasite is endemic in most of the UK. They admit that no formal public consultation has taken place. The reason for this regulation is because there are small parts of the EU and UK that do not currently have Varroosis, such as the Azores, Some islands in Denmark the Isle of Man and possibly some isolated valleys and islands in Scotland.

We are told that making the presence of Varroa mites reportable by beekeepers will provide an opportunity to gather information to inform future policy, strategic decisions on controls of Varroa and reduce its incidence as well as its spread.

In Kent all hives have varroa so it is not realistic for beekeepers to report varroa every time they do a hive inspection so the National Bee Unit have put a statement on Beebase to enable beekeepers to comply with the law by ticking a box once, and not wasting too much time.

The message on Beebase is:

### ***April 2021 - Reporting Varroa***

*On 21st April, 2021 an amendment to the Bee Diseases and Pests Control (England) Order 2006 comes into force requiring beekeepers and or officials to report the presence of Varroa in any of the hives that they manage. This amendment will allow England to comply with the Animal Health Law which is necessary for future working relationships with the European Union. Similar arrangements are being made in Wales and Scotland. To make this simple, a tick box will be introduced to BeeBase, the voluntary register for beekeepers managed by the National Bee Unit. This will allow beekeepers and inspectors to report the presence or absence of Varroa. Although Varroa is known to be widespread, it continues to be one of the most serious pests faced by beekeepers. Reporting Varroa will contribute to the overall pest and disease surveillance work of the National Bee Unit and we are grateful for your assistance with this new simple measure.*

This means you need to log on to Beebase and tick the box once only, that is all. I don't think there are any published plans to include those beekeepers not using Beebase.

John Hendrie