

CHAPTER 9.3.

INFECTION OF HONEY BEES WITH
Melissococcus plutonius
(EUROPEAN FOULBROOD)

Article 9.3.1.

General provisions

For the purposes of the *Terrestrial Code*, European foulbrood is a *disease* of the larval and pupal stages of honey bees (species of the genus *Apis*), caused by *Melissococcus plutonius*, a non-sporulating bacterium, which is widely distributed. 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.

When authorising import or transit of the *commodities* covered in the chapter, with the exception of those listed in Article 9.3.2., *Veterinary Authorities* should require the conditions prescribed in this chapter relevant to the European foulbrood status of the honey bee population of the *exporting country or zone*.

Standards for diagnostic tests are described in the *Terrestrial Manual*.

Article 9.3.2.

Safe commodities

When authorising import or transit of the following *commodities*, *Veterinary Authorities* should not require any European foulbrood related conditions, regardless of the European foulbrood status of the honey bee population of the *exporting country or zone*:

- 1) honey bee semen;
- 2) honey bee venom.

Article 9.3.3.

Determination of the European foulbrood status of a country or zone

The European foulbrood status of a country or *zone* 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* and all clinical signs suggestive of European foulbrood should be subjected to field and *laboratory* investigations;
- 3) an ongoing 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 reporting and control of *diseases* of honey bees should have current knowledge of, and authority over, all *apiaries* in the whole country.

Article 9.3.4.

Country or zone free from European foulbrood

- 1) Historically free status

A country or *zone* may be considered free from the *disease* after conducting a *risk assessment* as referred to in Article 9.3.3. but without formally applying a specific *surveillance* programme if the country or *zone* complies with the provisions of Chapter 1.4.

2) Free status as a result of an eradication programme

A country or *zone* 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 9.3.3. and when:

- a) the *Veterinary Authority* or other *Competent Authority* with responsibility for reporting and control of *diseases* of honey bees has current knowledge of, and authority over, all domesticated *apiaries* existing in the country or *zone*;
- b) European foulbrood is notifiable in the whole country or *zone*, and any clinical cases suggestive of European foulbrood are subjected to field and *laboratory* investigations;
- c) for the three years following the last reported isolation of the European foulbrood agent, an annual survey supervised by the *Veterinary Authority* or other *Competent Authority*, with no positive results, have been carried out on a representative sample of *apiaries* in the country or *zone* 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* or other *Competent Authority*, with no positive results, is carried out on a representative sample of hives in the country or *zone* to indicate that there has been no new isolations; such surveys may be targeted towards areas with a higher likelihood of isolation;
- e) either there is no wild or self-sustaining feral population of species of the genus *Apis* in the country or *zone*, or there is an ongoing *surveillance* programme of the wild or self-sustaining feral population of species of the genus *Apis* which demonstrates no evidence of the presence of the *disease* in the country or *zone*;
- f) the importation of the *commodities* listed in this chapter into the country or *zone* is carried out in conformity with the recommendations of this chapter.

Article 9.3.5.

Recommendations for the importation of live queen, worker and drone honey bees with or without associated brood combs

Veterinary Authorities of importing countries should require the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that:

- 1) the honey bees come from *apiaries* situated in a country or *zone* free from European foulbrood; or
- 2) the shipment comprises only honey bees without associated brood combs and:
 - a) the honey bees come from *apiaries* meeting the conditions prescribed in Article 4.14.5.; and
 - b) the *apiaries* where the honey bees come from are situated in the centre of an area with a radius of 3 kilometres where there has been no *outbreak* of European foulbrood during the past 30 days.

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 *commodities*:

- 1) come from *apiaries* situated in a country or *zone* free from European foulbrood; 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 *M. plutonius* by bacterial culture or PCR in accordance with the *Terrestrial Manual*.

Article 9.3.7.

Recommendations for the importation of used apicultural equipment

Veterinary Authorities of importing countries should require the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the equipment:

- 1) comes from *apiaries* situated in a country or *zone* free from European foulbrood; or

- 2) was sterilised under the supervision of the *Veterinary Authority* in conformity with one of the following procedures:
 - a) by immersion in 0.5% sodium hypochlorite for at least 20 minutes (suitable only for non-porous materials such as plastic and metal); or
 - b) by irradiation with 15 kGy; or
 - c) by any procedure of equivalent efficacy recognised by the *Veterinary Authority* of the *importing* and *exporting countries*.

Article 9.3.8.

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

Veterinary Authorities of importing countries should require the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the *commodities*:

- 1) come from *apiaries* situated in a country or *zone* free from European foulbrood; or
- 2) have been processed to ensure the destruction of *M. plutonius* by irradiation with 15 kGy or any procedure of equivalent efficacy recognised by the *Veterinary Authority* of the *importing* and *exporting countries*; or
- 3) have been found free of *M. plutonius* by a test method described in the relevant chapter of the *Terrestrial Manual*.

Article 9.3.9.

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

Veterinary Authorities of importing countries free from European foulbrood should require the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the *commodities*:

- 1) come from *apiaries* situated in a country or *zone* free from European foulbrood; or
 - 2) have been processed to ensure the destruction of *M. plutonius* by irradiation with 15 kGy or any procedure of equivalent efficacy recognised by the *Veterinary Authority* of the *importing* and *exporting countries*; or
 - 3) have been found free of *M. plutonius* by a test method described in the relevant chapter of the *Terrestrial Manual*.
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