Bee inspections

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Bees are an important part of our rural environment and, given their mobile nature, it's vital that we keep a close watch on any disease or infection that may affect the bee population.

If you suspect the presence of a disease or pest in your hives, you are legally obliged to let us know.

What we will look for

The aim of inspections is to look for specific notifiable pests or diseases. We call these notifiable diseases and pests, as you are required to notify us if you spot them.

Our inspectors will thoroughly examine the colonies and may take samples for analysis at Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture (SASA).

Notifiable diseases

The current notifiable diseases and pests in Scottish bees are:

- American foulbrood (AFB) & European foulbrood (EFB)
- Asian hornet: how to spot and report the pest
- Tropilaelaps
- Small hive beetle (SHB)

Inspection outcomes

In some cases, we will issue legal notices to prevent potentially contaminated material being moved during our investigation.

If a notifiable disease is confirmed, we will consult with our colleagues in SASA on how best to deal with the problem.

This may involve treating hives with light infections of European foulbrood or, unfortunately, for all infections of American foulbrood, destroying these affected colonies.

We will carry out follow-up inspections to ensure infections have been successfully dealt with.

Further information

Further details of the inspection process can be found in our guidance notes for Scottish Government bee inspectors.

Bee inspections guidance

How to get in touch with us

For bee health information and related matters please leave a message with Jackie Quigley on 0300 244 9151.

To contact the Honey Bee Health Team, please email Bees_mailbox@gov.scot

This mailbox is monitored regularly and your enquiry will be passed to the relevant team member.

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