

Varroa mites in NSW – Update



Above, Varroa mite (*Varroa destructor*).

The NSW Government is currently working through an emergency response in reaction to a varroa mite (*Varroa destructor*) incursion that has taken place in New South Wales. Varroa mites were first detected in two of six sentinel hives at the Port of Newcastle on Wednesday 22 June 2022. As of 15 July, the NSW DPI has halted the movement of beehives and honeybees across the state. DPI, Local Land Services, NSW Police, Rural Fire Service and the wider community are all working together to assist the apiary industry to arrest the spread of the parasite. An eradication plan is in place, which is supported by Varroa mite emergency zones covering areas within a 50km radius of infested premises. Eradication is also being undertaken for known feral colonies in the surveillance emergency zones.

NSW DPI will conduct ongoing surveillance of managed colonies within the surveillance emergency zones to ensure the spread of Varroa mite is prevented.

As of 15 July, a new detection was found at Wards River (north-west of Bulahdelah) increasing the total number of infested premises to 39 since Varroa mite was first identified.

DPI is working in partnership with the apiary and horticulture industries to develop a permit process to manage the movement of hives outside of the current emergency zones. The coming pollination season is important for both beekeepers and the horticulture industry and NSW DPI expect to have a process in place soon.

John Tyas, CEO of Avocados Australia, believes that it is vitally important that avocado growers contact their commercial beehive providers and stay in regular contact with them as the situation develops.

Avocados Australia's staff are taking part in regular briefings about the situation as we are members of the National Biosecurity Communication and Engagement Network.

“We are staying up to date with the situation and will inform industry as news comes to hand,” said John Tyas.

“We are also playing a part in the response and ensuring that the eradication program is sufficiently resourced.”

At this stage avocado growers outside of NSW can source commercial hives as long as they do not originate from NSW. Special meetings are currently happening to discuss the movement of hives and when decisions have been made we will be able to inform the industry.

“We are concerned for all our avocado growers particularly how this incursion will impact access to hives for the coming Spring.”

More information is available from NSW DPI website. Use the QR code below or enter this link in your browser to access: www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/varroa



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