

# Requirements for Importing Honey Bees into Ontario

Paul Kozak, OMAFRA, Provincial Apiary Specialist

## Infosheet

Updated on April 24, 2018

### Contents

Application Requirements.....	1
Import Requirements.....	2
Colonies or Nucleus Colonies Entering Ontario from another Province.....	2
Colonies or Nucleus Colonies Passing Through Ontario from another Province.....	2
Inspection Conditions.....	3
Honey Bee Colonies, Nucleus Colonies and Honey Bee Queens.....	3
Used Hive Equipment.....	3
Restrictions.....	4
American foulbrood (Paenibacillus larvae):.....	4
Varroa mites (Varroa destructor):.....	4
Small Hive Beetle (Aethina tumida):.....	5
Transportation through Ontario.....	5
From Outside of Canada, including the USA.....	5

### Application Requirements

Individuals and businesses intending to import honey bees into Ontario from another Canadian province must apply to the Ontario Provincial Apiarist for an import permit for each shipment.

The application form to import honey bees into Ontario can be found at

[www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/inspection/bees/importbees.htm](http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/inspection/bees/importbees.htm).

All applications must be accompanied by official inspection reports from the province of origin, based on inspections of the honey bees to be imported. Details are as follows:

**Note:** the health status of the honey bees detailed in the inspection reports and Orders issued in the province of origin will determine whether an import permit will be issued. Restrictions may be added or amended at any time, due to changes in the disease status of any jurisdiction or beekeeping operation.

## Import Requirements

The following are considered to be the minimum inspection requirements in order to be considered for an Ontario import permit. Further requirements may be requested due to the disease status of the originating operation or region within the exporting province, or at the discretion of the Provincial Apiarist (of either the exporting province or Ontario). These minimum conditions apply to operations without a history of American foulbrood (AFB).

### Colonies or Nucleus Colonies Entering Ontario from another Province

- All honey bees to be imported into Ontario must be inspected in the province of origin.
- Inspections must be conducted by provincially appointed government inspectors under the legislation governing honey bees (e.g. *Bees Act*) in the originating province.
- Inspections must be conducted in the current beekeeping season, within no more than 45 days of the intended date of entry to Ontario.
- Inspection reports must be completed for each inspection, and signed by the provincially appointed government inspector.
- Completed inspection reports must be sent by the Provincial Apiarist (or equivalent) of the exporting province, to Ontario's Provincial Apiarist.
- Inspection reports submitted within 7 days prior to shipment may not be processed, potentially resulting in denial of the requested import permit.
- The Provincial Apiarist (or equivalent) of the exporting province must provide to Ontario's Provincial Apiarist the documentation related to the honey bees being imported into Ontario, including:
  - all regulatory Orders issued within the previous 24 months, and
  - all official pest and disease corrective measures required by the exporting province's Apiary Program within the previous 24 months.

### Colonies or Nucleus Colonies Passing Through Ontario from another Province

If colonies are travelling through Ontario on their way to another province or country:

- The beekeeper must provide Ontario's Provincial Apiarist with the date of transit and the transit route 7 days in advance of entering Ontario. Any changes in the details of the transportation must be communicated immediately (date of changes) to the Ontario Provincial Apiarist.
- The Provincial Apiarist of the province of origin must provide the Ontario Provincial Apiarist with the current inspection reports supporting the movement of bees, and the number of colonies being transported.

## Inspection Conditions

The following are the minimum inspection conditions for any honey bee colonies, nucleus colonies, honey bee queens, or used hive equipment being imported into Ontario.

### Honey Bee Colonies, Nucleus Colonies and Honey Bee Queens

For each apiary or bee yard that is providing colonies for the load that will be imported into Ontario:

- A minimum of ten honey bee colonies or 10% of the total number of colonies in the apiary or bee yard (whichever is greater) must have a brood nest inspection and a top bar scan (completed for the presence small hive beetle).
- A minimum of 3 brood frames must be inspected in each colony receiving a brood nest inspection.
- Top bar scans (completed for the presence of small hive beetle) must be conducted on an additional 20% of the total number of colonies in the apiary.
- If clinical signs of AFB are found in any colonies within an apiary or bee yard, then brood nest inspections must be conducted on 100% of the colonies in the apiary.

### Used Hive Equipment

- Wax comb in honey supers (minimum three frames per box) must be inspected at a minimum of 10% of the boxes or 70 boxes (whichever is the greater number of boxes).
- Wax comb from the brood nest, dark or old honey supers (where the wax comb is dark) (minimum three frames per box) must be inspected at a minimum of 30% of the boxes or 100 boxes (whichever is the greater number of boxes).
- If symptoms of AFB are detected in any of the equipment being inspected for import into Ontario:
  - all boxes (100%) must be inspected. Exceptions may be made if all boxes (100%) are irradiated with cobalt irradiation and documentation that the irradiation took place (from the irradiation facility) is provided to Ontario's Provincial Apiarist.

## Restrictions

### American foulbrood (*Paenibacillus larvae*):

- Full sized or nucleus honey bee colonies or honey bee packages will not be permitted to enter Ontario as a permanent destination from counties or rural municipalities where strains of AFB resistant to the antibiotics Oxytetracycline or Tylosin ('resistant AFB' = rAFB) have been detected.
- Full sized or nucleus honey bee colonies or honey bee packages will not be permitted to enter Ontario as a permanent destination from beekeeping operations where strains of rAFB have been detected.
- Used beekeeping equipment will not be permitted to enter Ontario as a permanent destination from counties or rural municipalities where strains of rAFB have been detected. Exceptions may be made if all the equipment is irradiated with cobalt irradiation prior to shipment and is accompanied with documentation from the irradiation facility demonstrating that the equipment has been irradiated.
- Full sized or nucleus honey bee colonies or honey bee packages may be permitted to enter Ontario from a yard that has less than 2% of the colonies, but no more than 10 colonies, that are positive for AFB. However;
  - If permitted to enter Ontario, the colonies must be detained at the receiving site within Ontario for a period of two years.
  - No colonies that were found to be positive for AFB will be permitted to enter Ontario.
  - No colonies will be permitted from yards found with any clinical AFB from a province where rAFB has been detected.
  - Tracking documentation must be provided for the AFB positive colonies in a positive yard before any of the AFB negative colonies will be permitted to enter Ontario.

### Varroa mites (*Varroa destructor*):

- Full sized or nucleus honey bee colonies or honey bee packages will not be permitted to enter Ontario as a permanent destination (other than transit through) from counties or rural municipalities where strains of varroa mites resistant to the pesticide amitraz (resistant varroa) have been detected (resistant varroa = varroa which respond amitraz treatment with less than 80% efficacy by a Pettis or modified Pettis test).
- Full sized or nucleus honey bee colonies or honey bee packages will not be permitted to enter Ontario as a permanent destination from beekeeping operations where strains of resistant varroa have been detected.

### **Small Hive Beetle (*Aethina tumida*):**

- Honey bee operations and apiaries with small hive beetle (SHB) may be permitted to enter Ontario.
- In addition to the inspection reports provided by the originating jurisdiction, exporting beekeepers must report a positive SHB status to the Ontario Provincial Apiarist in any bee yards or honey bee colonies making up the import.
- Individual honey bee colonies with SHB damage and showing evidence of excessive SHB reproduction will not be permitted to enter Ontario as a permanent destination (other than transit through). This may include  $\geq 20$  SHB larvae in a single colony.

### **Transportation through Ontario**

- After inspection, shipments are to be transported directly and continuously through Ontario.
- Transportation plans are not to be modified *en route*.
- Colonies must be secured to the vehicle and are not permitted to be removed from the vehicle while passing through Ontario.
- If the vehicle transporting the bees is not enclosed, all colonies must be covered with netting from the point of departure in the exporting province until they have passed through Ontario (and any other provinces on the route).
- If there is an accident where the vehicle is stopped and honey bee colonies have come off the vehicle or the stability of the load is greatly compromised while in Ontario, the Ontario Provincial Apiarist must be notified.

### **From Outside of Canada, including the United States**

- No full sized colonies, nucleus colonies, or used hive equipment (i.e. wax comb) are permitted to enter Ontario from other countries.
- Honey bee queens or packaged honey bees entering Ontario from other countries must have a signed federal import permit from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA).
- This federal import permit must be submitted to the Ontario Provincial Apiarist in order for the importer to qualify for an Ontario import permit. Both federal and provincial import permits are required for the bees to enter Ontario.
- The exporting apiary must be certified as free from Africanized honey bee genetics as follows:
  - The queens and packaged honey bees originate from an apiary free of genes from the sub-Saharan type of Africanized honey bee, *Apis mellifera scutellata* and/or *Apis mellifera capensis*; and
  - In the past year, based on current maps and surveillance programs for Africanized honey bees, Africanized honey bees have not been detected within 100 miles of any of the apiaries from which the queens and packaged honey bees originate.

**For more information:**  
**Telephone:** 519-826-3595  
**E-mail:** [apiary@ontario.ca](mailto:apiary@ontario.ca)

**[www.ontario.ca/beekeeping](http://www.ontario.ca/beekeeping)**