

## **WHAT IS A 'DECA'?**

A Disease Elimination Conformity Agreement, or DECA, is a formal agreement between you as a beekeeper and the Management Agency. The agreement sets out a 'code of beekeeping practice' to ensure that the incidence of AFB in your hives will reduce to zero over a period of time and remain at that level once achieved.

Scientific and case study knowledge show that this goal is attainable if beekeepers follow the correct procedures. Courses will be available to all beekeepers from time to time, depending on demand at centre's throughout New Zealand.

The DECA agreements are tailored to suit each beekeeper's particular circumstances. If you have little or no AFB you won't need to change your beekeeping procedures much, if at all. Beekeepers with a progressively more serious AFB incidence in their hives will need tighter controls and more attention to detail in order to reduce the incidence.

In consultation with the Management Agency or the contractors, you will be able to review your procedures over time to ensure that the goal of AFB elimination is reached. The aim is to use these agreements to ensure that you get all the help and advice available to eliminate AFB from your beehives, and hence, from all beehives in the country!

## **WHO SHOULD HAVE A DECA?**

Hopefully nearly every beekeeper will eventually have a DECA. Remember, the PMS applies to any and every beekeeper, hobbyist and commercial. There will be some who, for a number of reasons, will not enter into an agreement to control AFB.

If you take up the offer of a DECA, you will need to show your proficiency in AFB identification and control by passing a Disease Recognition and Destruction Competency Test. The test can be taken "cold" or after completing a Disease Recognition and Destruction Course. You will have to complete the test before any DECA application will be approved. Courses are available to all beekeepers at centres throughout New Zealand, and will be organized where there is a demand. Applicants may arrange to complete the course and sit the test at a special venue, if necessary. A proctor will need to be arranged to supervise the sitting of the test."

If you enter into a DECA you will have Approved Beekeeper status and will receive a Certificate of Inspection Exemption. You will not have to complete a Certificate of Inspection each year for your hives. However, you must maintain a record of inspection dates and relevant information for audit purposes.

## **WITHOUT A DECA**

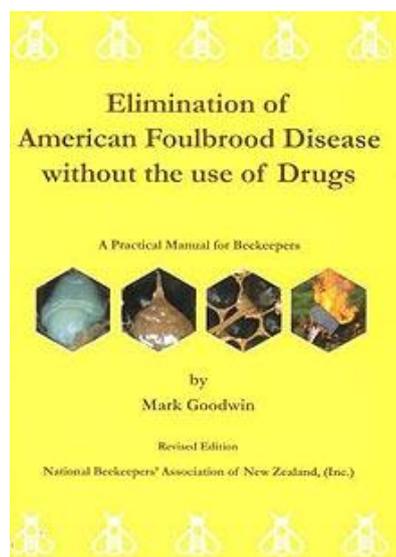
Those beekeepers who fail to respond to the Management Agency's offer to enter into a DECA agreement will be, for the purposes of the PMS, "unapproved" beekeepers. These beekeepers must furnish a Certificate of Inspection each year for their hives.

This certificate must be completed, and hives inspected by, an Approved Beekeeper, or by Management Agency personnel. Most beekeepers will incur some cost to have this work done for them.

Providing the Certificate of Inspection is not optional. If the beekeeper fails to arrange for this to happen the Management Agency will authorise a contractor to do the work and the beekeeper will be liable to pay for the services.

Beekeepers who for any reason do not have a DECA must furnish a Certificate of Inspection each year, again completed by an Approved Beekeeper, or by Management Agency personnel. These beekeepers will need to complete the Disease Recognition and Destruction course and pass the test before a DECA will be issued.

*Article originally from - [afb.org.nz](http://afb.org.nz)*



### **Becoming an Approved Beekeeper**

If you are planning on attending an AFB Recognition Course, it is strongly recommended that you obtain a copy of the booklet titled:

### **Elimination of American Foulbrood Disease without the Use of Drugs**