

# 2018

## Recommendations for Administering Antibiotics and Acaricides to Honey Bees

Prepared by and further information can be obtained from:

Rhéal Lafrenière  
Manitoba Agriculture  
204-545 University Crescent,  
Winnipeg, MB R3T 5S6  
Phone: 204-945-4825  
Fax: 204-945-4327  
[Rheal.Lafreniere@gov.mb.ca](mailto:Rheal.Lafreniere@gov.mb.ca)

### *Table of Contents of Recommended and Registered Treatments in Manitoba & Other Services*

<b>Antibiotics</b> .....	2
<b>AFB &amp; EFB Prevention &amp; Control</b> .....	2
Oxytetracycline Application .....	2
Tylan® Soluble .....	3
Empty Super Disinfection .....	4
<b>Nosema Disease Prevention</b> .....	4
Fumagilin-B® .....	4
<b>Acaricides</b> .....	5
<b>Varroa Mite Detection &amp; Control</b> .....	5
Rotating Treatments & IPM Strategy Comments .....	5
In-Field Detection & Sampling of Varroa .....	6
Apistan® .....	6
Bayvarol® .....	6
Apivar® .....	7
CheckMite+™ .....	8
Mite Away Quick Strips™ .....	8
Formic Acid 65% .....	9
Thymovar® .....	11
Oxalic Acid Applications .....	12
<b>Tracheal Mite Control</b> .....	13
Formic Acid Applications .....	13
Menthol Application .....	13
<b>Voluntary Pesticide Incident Reporting</b> .....	14
<b>Laboratory Diagnostic Services</b> .....	14

## **\*\* ANTIBIOTICS \*\***

### **IMPORTANT:**

- 1. Health Canada is in the process of developing an Antimicrobial Use Initiative that will restrict the over-the-counter availability of certain antibiotics (e.g. oxytetracycline and tylosin) and require veterinary prescription prior to use. The details of how this initiative will be implemented in Manitoba is not available at this time, but the deadline for the over-the-counter availability of oxytetracycline and tylosin is no later than December 1, 2018. After December 1<sup>st</sup>, a veterinarian prescription will be required to use these antibiotics in bee hives.**
- 2. All antibiotics and acaricides should only be administered to honey bee colonies according to recommended rates on the products label. Never administer antibiotics and acaricides while honey supers are on the hives unless explicitly stated safe to do so on the label.**

### **AFB & EFB PREVENTION & CONTROL**

Antibiotics are NOT a cure for American Foulbrood (AFB) or European Foulbrood (EFB) since viable bacterial spores may still be present in the hive after treatment. Therefore combs with visible signs of AFB or EFB should be removed from the hive and destroyed by fire or rendered for its wax. Furthermore, it is recommended that frames from infected hives, that are not showing signs of disease, be decontaminated (see below “Empty Super Disinfection), or destroyed (burned). Following removal of the diseased combs, start an antibiotic treatment.

In the hive, AFB that is resistant to antibiotic (rAFB) looks the same as AFB that is susceptible to the antibiotic. Fresh rAFB, “ropey brood” and old rAFB scale may appear on the same frame. Determination of resistance to antibiotics requires culturing of the bacteria in a laboratory; therefore, please submit any suspected AFB frames to the Manitoba Agriculture office in Winnipeg for testing.

#### **OXYTETRACYCLINE Application:**

*Active ingredient: Oxytetracycline (Oxytetracycline hydrochloride)*

Examples of Brands Available: **Foul Brood Mix®**, **Oxytet-25-S®**, **Oxysol 62.5®**

Oxytet-25® and Oxysol 62.5® require mixing with powdered sugar prior to application. Follow the product label directions for feeding these products to honey bees (see below for Oxytet-25®). Foul Brood Mix® is a ready-to-feed mix containing oxytetracycline, soy flour, brewer’s yeast and sucrose. Follow the product label directions for feeding this product to bees.

The following feeding recommendations for oxytetracycline are based on formulations containing 25 g of active ingredient per 454 g of product, ex: Oxytet-25®:

**Refer to product labels for instructions on specific product use.** According to the label, prepare by mixing 454 g of Oxytet-25® with 3.5 kg of icing sugar (1:8 ratio by weight). Place the mixture across the frame top bars at the front or back of the hive (i.e. over the end bars). **DO NOT** put the oxytetracycline/icing sugar mixture over the center of the hive as it may fall down between the frames and kill unsealed brood.

The first oxytetracycline application would typically occur within 4 days of installing the package or unpacking a wintered colony. One 454 g package will provide enough antibiotic to treat 90 spring package colonies or 45 wintered colonies.

Spring packages or small colonies should receive 14 g (1 tablespoon) of the oxytetracycline/icing sugar mixture, per colony per application, for a total 42 g per colony (i.e. 3 applications of 14 g, 4-5 days apart). Wintered colonies should receive 28 g (2 tablespoons) of the oxytetracycline/icing sugar mixture, per colony per application, for a total of 84 g per colony (i.e. 3 x 28 g, 4-5 days apart).

**In order to prevent possible contamination of marketable honey, all oxytetracycline treatments in spring or fall must occur outside the honey production season and stop at least 4 WEEKS before the start of honey production.** Honey or syrup stored in the colony during the antibiotic treatment period should not be used for human consumption!

**Other methods of administering Oxytetracycline (NOT PREFERRED):**

- a) Oxytetracycline and sugar syrup – Oxytetracycline breaks down in sugar syrup, especially when exposed to ultra-violet rays (ex: sunlight). Therefore, feeding outside in glass jars, i.e. boardman feeders, is NOT PREFERRED.
- b) Oxytetracycline Extender Patties – This method involves incorporating oxytetracycline into a soft patty made of shortening (ex: Crisco®) and sugar. In this preparation, the antibiotic remains stable over a long period of time.

This method of administering oxytetracycline is NOT RECOMMENDED for the following reasons:

- i. weak honey bee colonies often will not consume the extender patty and therefore will not benefit from the antibiotic treatment
- ii. leaving extender patties on colonies during the nectar flow may result in antibiotics being found in extracted honey
- iii. may facilitate the development of antibiotic resistance in the bacteria

**TYLAN® SOLUBLE Application:**

*Active ingredient: Tylosin tartrate*

Colonies identified for treatment should receive 3 treatments administered as a dust in confectioners/powdered sugar. The 200 mg dose is applied (dusted) over the top bars of the brood chamber once weekly for 3 weeks.

**Provincial Apiarists from across Canada are recommending that Tylan® Soluble only be used in consultation with the Provincial Apiarist.**

To avoid residues in honey, Tylan® Soluble should **NOT** be used in the spring (i.e. **Fall Treatment Only**). Residue problems can also occur if the feed (honey or syrup) stored in the colony during fall treatments is **NOT** consumed by the bees before honey production begins. Honey from brood nest areas of colonies treated with Tylan® Soluble should **NOT** be harvested for human consumption.

**Tylan Soluble should only be used in honey bee colonies that have TESTED positive for American Foulbrood disease.**

Tylan® Soluble is a granulated powder, which is easily soluble in water. Tylan® Soluble is available in a jar size with 100g tylosin tartrate. If you have any questions about Tylan® Soluble or any other ELANCO products, please contact ELANCO at 1-800-773-7603 or talk to the Provincial Apiarist.

**Empty Super DISINFECTION:**

Empty supers with frames exposed to irradiation (ex: 10 kGy electron beam irradiation) treatment is an effective sterilization treatment for AFB and EFB spores. Pollen used as bee feed can also be treated at the same dose of irradiation. For more information on irradiation disinfection, please contact the Provincial Apiarist.

**NOSEMA DISEASE PREVENTION**

The following recommendations are for treating Nosema disease caused by Nosema apis; however another species of Nosema, Nosema ceranae has also been found in Manitoba. Current research suggests that both species of Nosema respond to antibiotic treatment but that more information is needed to determine if modifications to the Fumagilin-B® label will be required for the effective control of both species. Please note that the information below is based on the current recommendations found on the Fumagilin-B® label (Medivet Pharmaceuticals DIN 02231180 (21 mg/g)).

**FUMAGILIN-B®**

*Active ingredient: “Fumagillin” (Bicyclohexylammonium fumagillin)*

Fumagillin is available in a variety of container sizes, depending on the brand name; therefore always follow the product’s label recommendations. As a general guideline, 1.0 g of fumagillin will provide enough antibiotic for treatment of approximately 10 spring package colonies or 5 wintered colonies. **Refer**

<b>Fumagilin-B® Preparation by Bottle Size</b>	<b>Will Provide One Treatment For:</b>
Mix 0.5 g (small bottle) in 20 L of syrup	6 spring packages or 3 wintered colonies
Mix 2.0 g (medium bottle) in 80 L of syrup	21 spring packages or 11 wintered colonies
Mix 9.5 g (large bottle) in 380 L of syrup	100 spring packages or 50 wintered colonies

**to product labels for instructions on specific product use.**

*Important:* Medicated syrup is best prepared at a concentration of 25 mg Fumagillin base per liter of syrup, usually 2:1 syrup (two parts of sugar to one part of water). The water may be warm (20-50°C).

**Colonies infected with NOSEMA should be treated with Fumagilin-B® in sugar syrup, according to time of year and colony size/type, as follows:**

**FALL TREATMENT:** After all honey supers have been removed, feed medicated syrup at the following rates (see above for Fumagillin Preparation):

- For each 2 chamber colony (approx. 30,000 bees): 7-8 L treated syrup (approx. 2 gal)
- For each 1 chamber colony (approx. 18,000 bees): 4 L treated syrup (approx. 1 gal)
- For each 5 frame colony (approx. 12,000 bees): 3 L treated syrup (approx. ¾ gal)

**SPRING TREATMENT:** In the spring when colonies are stressed due to inclement weather conditions, mite infestation, other disease factors, or intensive spring management, feed medicated syrup at the following rates (see above for Fumagillin Preparation):

- For each 2 chamber colony (approx. 20,000 bees): 3-4 L treated syrup (approx. 1 gal)
- For each 1 chamber colony (approx. 12,000 bees): 2 L treated syrup (approx. ½ gal)

- For each 5 frame colony (approx. 8,000 bees): 1-2 L treated syrup (approx. ½ gal)
- For each package colony: 1-2 L treated syrup (approx. ½ gal)

Treatment with Fumagilin-B®, which may be necessary in the **LATE WINTER** (February-March), should follow the regime for **SPRING TREATMENT** (as described above). Prior to fall feeding of colonies, it may be advisable to have combs 2, 5, 7 and 9 empty in the second brood chamber for storage of the medicated syrup.

**\*RESEARCH HAS SHOWN THAT OXYTETRACYCLINE & FUMAGILLIN MAY BE ADMINISTERED SAFELY AT THE SAME TIME PROVIDED THE DOSAGES DO NOT EXCEED THE RECOMMENDED RATES\***

## **\*\* ACARICIDES \*\***

### **VARROA MITE DETECTION & CONTROL (Varroa destructor)**

#### **Rotating Treatments & Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Strategy Comments:**

It's recommended that beekeepers monitor for varroa and rotate acaricides to decrease the risk of treatment-resistance and contamination of wax and honey by high-residual acaricides. The following acaricides: Apistan®, Bayvarol® CheckMite+™, Apivar®, Thymovar, Formic Acid products, and Oxalic Acid are available for varroa mite control and should be used according to instructions on their packaging. In order to minimize the risk of developing treatment-resistant mites, it is important that beekeepers try to avoid consecutive treatments (ex: spring & fall) using the same product or products with similar chemistries such as Apistan® and Bayvarol®.

Placement of a screen (3 mm x 3 mm mesh, or “No. 8 mesh”) over the bottom-board, to separate fallen mites from bees and reduce mite re-entry into the colony, may help reduce varroa infestation. “Screen bottom-boards”, as they are often called, **do not significantly reduce varroa populations on their own**; however, in combination with acaricides or genetically-resistant (ex: hygienic) bees, have been found to be of some benefit. **Cultural control methods, as well as genetically-resistant bees, help control varroa year-round not just during spring and fall.** A screen-bottomboard can also facilitate the detection of varroa in a hive (see below) although an alcohol varroa-wash of bees from the brood area is more consistently accurate. It's important to note that having a screen over the bottomboard that restricts honey bee access can result in a buildup of wax and pollen debris on the bottomboard. If the debris is not removed by the beekeeper on a regular basis, scavenger pests such as wax moth that feed on this debris may become more of a problem.

Honey bee colonies should be monitored for varroa on a regular basis, preferably in the spring and fall, to determine infestation levels relative to economic thresholds, and to ensure that previous control procedures have been effective. In the spring build up period, it is recommended varroa levels should be maintained below 1% (i.e. 1 mite per 100 adult bees). In the fall period, it is recommended varroa levels should be maintained at 1-3% or less with significant brood present (ex: early fall), and less than 10% when there is little brood (ex: late fall). The decrease in brood and subsequent movement of mites onto adult bees accounts for the higher threshold in the fall period. **Note that this varroa threshold information assumes honey bee tracheal mite levels are at or near zero, and that colony health is dependent on more than just mite levels. Mite levels may increase due to the development of resistance to control products, improper application of treatment, or re-infestation from a neighboring apiary.** To discuss specific recommendations regarding combinations of varroa mite, honey bee tracheal mite and possibly other honey bee disease, please contact the Apiculture office. A video on

**how to monitor for varroa mite** can be viewed on the website of the Manitoba Beekeepers' Association (MBA) at [www.manitobabee.org](http://www.manitobabee.org) (videos).

**In-Field Detection & Sampling of Varroa, 2 methods:** A. Varroa-wash (ex: bucket or shaker method), and B. Natural fall. Sampling for varroa from 5 hives in a bee yard of 30 hives should give a good idea of varroa infestation in that yard but more hives will strengthen results.

A. Scoop 200-300 bees from **brood area frames**, into a container with a screened lid, and shake the container in windshield washing fluid (blue) or soapy water for several minutes, to dislodge the mites from the bees. Sampling from the brood area is important! It helps to ensure accuracy, consistency and to reduce variability. To calculate approximate percent infestation level, count the number of dislodged mites, divide by the number of bees in the cup, and multiply by 100. See above for spring and fall thresholds.

B. Using a screen bottom-board, place a sticky board (sticky side up) into the space between the screen and floor of the bottomboard. Sticky boards are commercially available or can be made using a sticky spreadable substance, such as a thin layer of Tanglefoot on white cardboard, plastic or similar media. As a general guideline of natural varroa mite drop during brooding periods; 1 varroa mite per 24-hr suggests an infestation level of at least 1%,. Whereas, natural mite drop of 30-40 mites per 24-hr period suggests an infestation level of approximately 5% -- Note that natural varroa mite drop is affected by a number of factors including weather and genetics, so sampling over several days can help to minimize these influences when calculating estimated average mite fall.

**It is for this reason that monitoring should occur over several days (i.e. 2-3 days) and that the average daily mite drop be calculated by dividing the number of mites by the number of days the sticky boards have been in the hive.**

**APISTAN®** (Apistan® anti-Varroa mite strips) *Active ingredient: 10% Fluvalinate (fluvalinate-tau)*

FOR CONTROL OF VARROA MITES

The label can be found online at: <http://pr-rp.hc-sc.gc.ca/lr-re/index-eng.php> (search “apistan”)

At this time, varroa resistance to Apistan® is widespread in the province; so control using this product may produce variable results, therefore monitoring efficacy is critical.

**WEAR CHEMICAL-RESISTANT GLOVES WHEN HANDLING THE STRIPS.**

Just before application, remove the required number of strips from the pouch. Unused strips should remain in the original package.

**Refer to product labels for instructions on specific product use.** Use 1 strip for each 5 combs of bees in each brood chamber (Langstroth deep frames or equivalent in other sizes). Hang the strips in separate spaces between the combs as near the center of the bee/brood cluster as possible. If two brood chambers are used for the brood nest, hang the strips in both the top and bottom brood chambers. For best chemical distribution, use the strips when daytime high temperatures are at least 10°C. Hives may be treated in the spring before the honey flow and/or in the fall after the honey flow. Do not treat when honey supers are on the hives. Place the strips in the hives for up to 42 days (6 weeks). According to the label, honey supers may be placed on colonies after the strips have been removed.

**BAYVAROL®** (Bayvarol® Beehive Pest Control Strip)

*Active ingredient: Flumethrin sum of the trans-Z isomers .....3.6 mg per strip*

FOR CONTROL OF VARROA MITES

The label can be found online at: <http://pr-rp.hc-sc.gc.ca/lr-re/index-eng.php> (search “Bayvarol”)

**Since both Bayvarol® (flumethrin) and Apistan® (fluvalinate-tau) are Group 3A insecticides, it is therefore probable that cross-resistance to flumethrin is present in Canada, and could limit the performance and utility of Bayvarol®.**

**However the potential for reversion of resistance suggests that despite the probability of cross-resistance, Bayvarol® may be successfully used in areas with Group 3A-resistant varroa mite populations when used in rotation with non-Group 3A insecticides.**

**WEAR CHEMICAL-RESISTANT GLOVES WHEN HANDLING THE STRIPS.**

Just before application, remove the required number of strips from the pouch. Unused strips should remain in the original package.

**Refer to product labels for instructions on specific product use.** Nucleus colonies, packages or and newly collected swarms receive two strips. Wintered singles or double receive a maximum of four strips per brood chamber. Strips are suspended between frames in the central brood rearing area in such a way that the bees will contact the strips on both sides. When using the tabs on the strips have them bend outward in the same direction at the marked fold lines and hook them over the top edge of the frame. For large colonies occupying more than one brood chamber, strips can be joined together end-to-end, which enables their insertion into and removal from the bee spaces without having to separate the brood chambers. For best chemical distribution, use the strips when daytime high temperatures are at least 10°C. Place the strips in the hives for up to 42 days (6 weeks). Best efficacy is to be expected when Bayvarol Strips are used in late summer after the honey harvest. To ensure effective treatment, varroa mites should be monitored for resistance prior to applying Bayvarol strips.

**\* DO NOT TREAT WHEN HONEY SUPERS ARE ON THE HIVES \***

**APIVAR® Active ingredient: 3.3% Amitraz**

**FOR CONTROL OF VARROA MITES**

The label can be found online at: <http://pr-rp.hc-sc.gc.ca/lr-re/index-eng.php> (search “Apivar”)

**Precautions:** Keep strips in original, unopened packaging, away from foodstuffs. Avoid inhalation of product vapour when opening the sealed packet of strips. Avoid contact with skin and eyes and wear latex gloves when handling the strips. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after use, product may be harmful if absorbed through the skin or inhaled. Very toxic to fish and other aquatic organisms!

Use 2 Apivar® strips per brood chamber (i.e. 1 strip per 5 Frames of Bees).

Number of Frames of Bees:	≤5	6-10	11-15	≥16
Number of Strips to Use:	1	2	3	4

**Refer to product labels for instructions on specific product use.** To control varroa mite, remove honey supers before application of Apivar®. Use 2 Apivar® strips per brood chamber. Separate the double strip and hang each strip between two comb frames inside the brood area or the bee cluster, with a minimum distance of 2 frames between strips. Suspend Apivar® strips in the brood chamber in such a way that the bees can walk on both sides of the strips. **Using a nail or toothpick to hang the strips may facilitate this.** Leave strips inside the hive for 42 days, and then remove. In case of movement inside the beehive far from the strips, it is very important to reposition the strips into the bee cluster, and leave the strips in place for 14 more days before removal. Strips must be removed after a maximum of 56 days. DO NOT re-use the strips.

**Timing:** Hang Apivar® strips in the hives in spring before the first honey flow if varroa mite infestations have reached treatment threshold. **DO NOT USE APIVAR® STRIPS WHEN HONEY SUPERS ARE PRESENT.** If mite infestation is severe, colonies are to be treated in the fall after all surplus honey has been removed from the hive. Remove honey supers before use of Apivar® strips. Consult provincial guidelines for more information on varroa control.

Withholding period for honey collection: Do NOT use while honey supers are present. Wait 14 days after removing strips before placing honey supers on hive.

**CHECKMITE+™ (CheckMite+™ Beehive Pest Control Strip)**

**Active ingredient: 10% Coumaphos**

FOR CONTROL OF VARROA MITES

The label can be found online at: <http://pr-rp.hc-sc.gc.ca/lr-re/index-eng.php> (search “checkmite)

At this time, varroa resistance to CheckMite+™ is widespread in the province; therefore when using this product, control may be inadequate or variable, and close monitoring is critical.

**WEAR CHEMICAL-RESISTANT GLOVES WHEN HANDLING THE STRIPS.**

Just before application, remove the required number of strips from the pouch. Unused strips should remain in the original package.

**Refer to product labels for instructions on specific product use.** Use 1 strip for each 5 combs of bees in each brood chamber (Langstroth deep frames or equivalent in other sizes). Hang the strips in separate spaces between the combs as near the center of the bee/brood cluster as possible. If two brood chambers are used for the brood nest, hang the strips in both the top and bottom brood chambers. For best chemical distribution, use the strips when daytime high temperatures are at least 10°C.

Hives may be treated in the spring before the honey flow and/or in the fall after the honey flow. Treatment must be **removed at least 2 WEEKS before the honey flow.** Place the strips in the hives for 42 days (6 weeks) **up to a maximum of 45 days. It is not recommended to use coumaphos more than once a year, preferably after efficacy testing has indicated that it is still effective at controlling mites.**

**It is IMPORTANT NOT to leave coumaphos strips in hives beyond the recommended treatment period as damage to colonies may occur.**

**MITE AWAY QUICK STRIPS™**

**Active ingredient: 46.7% Formic Acid**

FOR CONTROL OF VARROA MITES OR TRACHEAL MITES

The label can be found online at: <http://pr-rp.hc-sc.gc.ca/lr-re/index-eng.php> (search “miteaway)

**Refer to product labels for instructions on specific product use. Precautions:** DO NOT get in eyes, on skin or on clothing. Avoid inhaling vapour. Wear goggles, chemically-resistant gloves, long sleeves and full-length pants or coveralls, and boots when handling formic acid. Work outdoors, and always stand upwind of the use location. Formic acid vapours may disturb colony activities and may result in queen rejection or a slight increase in bee mortality, especially at temperatures above 33°C. Avoid contact with surfaces or objects made of metal.

**Timing:** To minimize residues and contamination of marketable honey, carefully follow all label instructions. Pre-Harvest Interval: Honey: at least 2 weeks from the end of the treatment. Use Mite-Away Quick Strips™ as part of an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program. Treat only if treatment thresholds are exceeded. Treatment period is 7 days.

When treatment levels are reached, use Mite-Away Quick Strips™ for single or double brood-chamber, standard Langstroth equipment honey bee hives, and honey bee colony cluster covering a minimum of 6 brood frames. Outside daytime temperature highs should be between 10 - 29°C on day of application. Excessive temperatures (> 29°C) during the first three days of treatment may cause excessive brood mortality and queen loss. Brood mortality may occur in the initial stage of treatment. Overall colony health is not expected to be affected, with brood rearing returning to normal by the end of treatment. Treatment of smaller colonies than those listed on the label will result in excessive brood mortality and even in colony mortality.

Disturb colony activity as little as possible during the application process. An entrance must be provided that is the full width of the hive, typically the bottom board entrance. The bottom hive entrance needs to be fully open for the entire duration of treatment. Any restriction on the hive entrance (reducer or mouse guard) **MUST** be removed to prevent excessive damage to the colonies. According to the manufacturer if a screen bottom board is used and the screen is not covered to function more like a traditional bottom board, then efficacy may be reduced. Remove the Mite-Away Quick Strips™ from the outer pouch. Leave the paper wrap intact as it forms a necessary part of the vapour release system.

For hives with single brood chambers lay two strips across the top bars of the frames of the brood chambers, staggering them so they lay flat and across the full width of the hive body, with approximately 5 cm between strips and 10 cm between the ends of the brood chamber and the outer edges of the strips.

For hives with two brood chambers place the strips as described above on the frame top bars of the lower hive body, so the strips are in-between the brood chambers. Colonies are expected to expand the cluster as part of controlling vapour concentration during the first 3 days of treatment. It is acceptable to have queen excluders in place. Do not disturb the colony for 7 days. Spent strips need not be removed after treatment. If they are removed, dispose of by composting. Treat all bee colonies in the apiary at the same time. Allow a minimum of one month between applications.

For information on supply in Manitoba contact Jonathan Hofer (Scott Creek Honey Farm) 204-981-6562, [scottcreekhoney@gmail.com](mailto:scottcreekhoney@gmail.com), <http://www.scottcreekhoney.com> (located in Elie, MB).

### **FORMIC ACID (65%)**

#### **FOR CONTROL OF VARROA MITES OR TRACHEAL MITES**

The label can be found online at: <http://pr-rp.hc-sc.gc.ca/lr-re/index-eng.php> (“formic acid 65%)

**Precautions:** DO NOT get in eyes, on skin or on clothing. Avoid inhaling vapour. Work outdoors, stay upwind, and wear cotton coveralls, chemical resistant gloves and chemical safety goggles when handling, applying, cleaning up and removing pads. Formic acid vapours may result in colony damage, especially at high temperatures.

Formic Acid 65% is used for treatment against varroa mites and tracheal mites in honey bee colonies as part of an IPM program to manage both varroa and tracheal mite populations.

**Application Precautions:** For all Formic Acid 65% applications, all holes in the hive should be sealed except the bottom hive entrance, which should be fully open for the entire duration of treatments, even for applications in the late fall. It is important to remove entrance reducers to prevent excessive build up of formic acid vapours on the colonies. All bee colonies in the apiary should be treated at the same time to prevent cross-infestation of colonies. Efficacy of formic acid is affected by ambient weather conditions (ex: low temperatures, high humidity). It is important to follow the directions specific to the season of use. Formic acid is corrosive to metal. Metallic materials inside the hive or those, which are in direct contact with formic acid, may corrode. Do not place, even briefly, formic acid on metallic hive covers.

Do not use Formic Acid 65% during honey flow. To minimize residues and contamination of marketable honey, carefully follow all label instructions. Pre-Harvest Interval: waiting at least 2 weeks from the end of the treatment to put on honey supers will help prevent contamination of marketable honey and any off-flavour taste in honey.

#### **For Control of Tracheal and Varroa Mites:**

To control varroa and tracheal mites, Formic Acid 65% is to be applied onto an absorbent material (ex: an absorbent paper pad) placed on the bottom board or the hive top bars, at rates of 30 to 40 ml per two-story colony or 15 to 20 ml per one-story colony. Use when outside temperatures are between 10°C and 30°C, and leave hive entrances fully open. The treatment is to be repeated up to six times at 1 to 10-day intervals. Repetition of treatment at least 4 times is recommended if used as a stand-alone treatment, but fewer can be used if part of an IPM program.

#### **For Control of Tracheal and Varroa Mites (Slow Release Method):**

This application method uses 250 ml of Formic Acid 65% per hive. Formic acid slow-release pads are made by placing a piece of absorbent material (ex: fiberboard, felt) in a perforated re-sealable plastic vegetable storage bag (3.8 L size). The piece of absorbent material must be of sufficient size to absorb 250 ml of Formic Acid 65%. Allow sufficient time for the 250 ml of Formic Acid 65% to soak into the absorbent material. The perforated bag containing the Formic Acid 65% soaked absorbent material must be sealed in an un-perforated plastic bag for storage and/or transport. At the site while wearing acid-resistant gloves, remove the outer plastic bag, but not the perforated bag before placement on the top bars of the hive. A spacer rim may be required on the top of the brood chamber to allow sufficient space to accommodate the pad. Leave the slow-release application in place for 21-30 days. To reduce the chance of hive injury, this application method should only be used when the varroa mite economic threshold has been exceeded; temperatures are not above 30°C. Treated colonies may have temporary suppression of population growth, from which the hive will recover following treatment.

#### **Application Directions Specific to Season of Use:**

##### **Spring and Early Fall Treatments:**

Use Formic Acid 65% for single or double brood-chamber honey bee colonies (bees covering 6 – 20 frames) in standard Langstroth equipment. Outside daytime temperature highs should be between 10 - 26°C at the time of application. Temperatures above 30°C during the application period may cause excessive damage to the colonies. When using the slow release method, it is highly recommended to remove the pads from the hives if temperatures above 30°C occur (ex: when daily temperatures exceed 28°C for several days) within the first 7 days of treatment, the period during which most of the formic acid is released. Resume treatment by replacing the treatment on the hives after the end of the period of high ambient temperatures. Failure to remove formic acid from colonies during a heat wave may cause excessive brood mortality and absconding. Up to 14 days of brood mortality may occur in the initial stage of treatment, with single brood chamber colonies being more susceptible to damage than double brood-chamber colonies. Overall colony health should not be affected, and brood rearing should recover by the end of the treatment

period. Treatment of colonies with fewer frames of bees than recommended may result in excessive brood mortality and even in colony mortality.

**Late Fall, Early Winter Treatments (post-feeding, brood rearing minimal with less than half a frame of brood):**

Formic Acid 65% can be used to treat single brood-chamber colonies with bees covering 5 – 10 frames in standard Langstroth equipment. Treatment of smaller hives than recommended (less than 5 frames of bees) may result in excessive colony damage, leading overwintering mortality. Due to slower diffusion of formic acid, Formic Acid 65% is not effective on larger than single-storey hives in cooler temperatures. Outside daytime temperature highs should be above 4°C at the time of application. When using the slow release method, for temperature highs below 15°C, cut a single slit across the centre of the perforated plastic vegetable storage bag, when applying the slow-release treatment to the hive. This slit, which should face upward after the pad is applied to the hive, allows the release of formic acid from the pads in the cooler, shorter daylight conditions. Do not cut a slit if temperature highs are above 15°C.

**Other Formic Acid Applications:**

For information about MiteGone™ please visit the manufacture's website:

MiteGone™ - <http://www.mitegone.com/>

**THYMOVAR®**

*Active ingredient: Thymol (15 g per wafer)*

FOR CONTROL OF VARROA MITES

The label can be found online at: <http://pr-rp.hc-sc.gc.ca/ls-re/index-eng.php> (search “thymovar)

**Precautions:** Wear protective goggles or a face shield and chemically resistant gloves, long-sleeve shirt, pants, shoes, and socks whenever handling Thymovar and when performing clean-up and maintenance activities. CORROSIVE to the eyes and skin, potential skin sensitizer! Harmful or fatal if swallowed! Avoid inhaling the vapour, because failure to do so may cause severe respiratory irritation. Handle Thymovar in a well-ventilated area.

**Refer to product labels for instructions on specific product use.** Prior to Thymovar treatment, remove all honey supers and close or replace open or screened hive floors with solid floors, and reduce the hive entrance to normal size. It is recommended that if bees are fed, that part of the feeding be carried out before treatment with Thymovar, if varroa infestation levels and temperatures allow.

For control of varroa mite in honey bee hives, apply 2 consecutive applications of Thymovar. Thymovar is applied at a rate of ½ wafer for nucleus hives, 1 wafer for single brood chamber hives, or 2 wafers for double brood chamber hives. Thymovar wafers are left in the hive for a 3-4 week treatment period. Immediately following the first application, remove the used wafer(s) and apply a second application of Thymovar. The second application of wafer(s) are also left in the hive for 3-4 weeks. All wafers should be used immediately after opening the sealed sachet. Remove all wafer(s) from the hive after each application period.

For 1 wafer applications in single brood chamber hives, cut the wafer in half. For 2 wafer applications in double brood chamber hives, use uncut wafers. The cut or uncut wafer(s) are placed on top of the combs of the top brood chamber on either side of the edge of the brood, close to but not directly over open or sealed brood. Wafers are preferably placed a minimum of 4 cm from brood. Close the hive, leaving a space (about 5 mm) between the wafers and the hive covers, to improve the evaporation of thymol.

**Timing:** Thymovar must only be used when honey supers are not present on the hive. Applications may be made in the spring, before honey flow or in the late summer to early autumn, after all surplus honey has been removed. Apply when maximum daily temperatures are above 12°C and below 30°C. Temperatures below 12°C will reduce the effectiveness of the treatment, while temperatures above 30° will cause increased stress and mortality of adult bees and brood.

#### **Application Notes:**

- Thymovar does not control varroa mites in capped cells, therefore the lethal thymol vapour concentration must be maintained in the hive for several weeks.
- DO NOT use more Thymovar wafers than recommended. To minimize residues, carefully follow all label instructions. At higher concentrations, thymol residue may impart off-flavour to honey.
- Bees may remove food from directly under the Thymovar wafer(s).
- The application of Thymovar during feeding may reduce acceptance of the feed. Do not place Thymovar wafer(s) near a sugar feeder as this may reduce feeding. Efficacy of Thymovar may be reduced if applied during the feeding period, due to increased ventilation by the bees.
- To reduce risk of robbery, all colonies in an apiary should be treated with Thymovar at the same time.
- Following treatment, monitor mite levels and apply a non-thymol based control if needed.
- DO NOT apply to any body of water.

#### **OXALIC ACID Applications:**

**Active ingredient: Oxalic Acid Dihydrate**

FOR CONTROL OF VARROA MITES

The label can be found online at: <http://pr-rp.hc-sc.gc.ca/lr-re/index-eng.php> (search “oxalic”)

**Precautions:** WEAR GOGGLES, CHEMICAL-RESISTANT GLOVES, PROTECTIVE CLOTHING, AND BOOTS WHEN HANDLING OXALIC ACID

\* \* Wear a respirator when applying oxalic acid with a vaporizer \* \*

The application of Oxalic Acid Dihydrate should be limited to outdoor use only. DO NOT use in enclosed overwintering areas.

There are two oxalic acid application methods for varroa control: Syrup Solution and Vaporizer (see below). **CAUTION: Oxalic Acid Dihydrate might damage bee brood. Oxalic Acid Dihydrate will not control Varroa mites in capped brood. Best results, use only in fall or spring when little or no brood is present. Do not use when honey supers are in place, to prevent contamination of marketable honey.**

#### **1. Syrup Solution Method:**

Preparation:

- Prepare 50% sugar syrup (1:1 sugar:water (weight:volume)) (ex: 1 kg sugar in 1L water).
- Add 35 g of oxalic acid dihydrate crystals to each 1L of sugar syrup.
- Stir the solution very well. The crystals dissolve best if the sugar solution is warm. All of the crystals must be dissolved.
- Make the solution within days of treating the colonies and keep refrigerated until use.

**NOTE: 1L oxalic acid solution will treat 20 colonies (calculate: 1000mL / 50mL per colony)**

Do not store leftover oxalic acid treatment solution. The oxalic acid changes in composition and becomes toxic to the bees. The crystalline powder should be stored at room temperature in an airtight container. This will prevent absorption of moisture, which causes the powder to solidify. Oxalic acid is odourless in all forms.

Application:

Smoke bees down from the top bars. With a syringe or an applicator, trickle 5 ml of this solution directly onto the bees in each occupied bee space in each brood box. Penetration of the solution into the clustering bees is best done when the cluster is not too tight, which is typically when outside temperatures are between 12°C - 14°C. The maximum dose is 50 ml per colony whether bees are in nucs, single, or multiple brood chambers. Under certain unfavorable conditions (ex: weak colonies, unfavorable overwintering conditions), this application method may cause some bee mortality or overwintering bee loss.

**2. Vaporizer Method:**

Apply only to outdoor colonies with a restricted lower hive entrance. Seal all upper hive entrances and cracks with tape to avoid escape of Oxalic Acid vapor. When possible, treat while hives are wrapped (e.g.: winter wrap) to ensure they are properly sealed. Smoke bees up from the bottom board. Place 2.0 g Oxalic Acid Dihydrate powder into vaporizer. Follow the vaporizer manufacturer's directions for use. Insert the vaporizer apparatus through the bottom entrance. Apply heat until all Oxalic Acid has sublimated.

**TRACHEAL MITE CONTROL (Acarapis woodi)**

**Formic Acid Applications:**

For Tracheal Mite control using other formic acid treatments, please refer to info on page 8-10.

**TRACHEAL MITE TREATMENT (TMT)**

*Active ingredient: Formic Acid (65%)*

FOR CONTROL OF HONEY BEE TRACHEAL MITES (HBTM)

The label can be found online at: <http://pr-rp.hc-sc.gc.ca/lr-re/index-eng.php>

**MENTHOL:**

*Active ingredient: Menthol (food grade, purity greater than 98%)*

FOR CONTROL OF HONEY BEE TRACHEAL MITES (HBTM)

**Refer to product labels for instructions on specific product use.** Menthol crystals should be used when outside temperature is 20-30°C, while menthol-shortening formulations should be used when outside temperature is 15-30°C, unless otherwise indicated on packaging. Store in a well-sealed container in a cool place (ex: freezer). *Caution:* Menthol vapourizes readily and should only be used in a well-ventilated area. **Menthol treatments must be removed 4 WEEKS before the main honey flow** to prevent unwanted residues from occurring in honey or wax, unless otherwise stated on the product packaging.

Apply Menthol at the following rates, according to colony type/size (see applications below):

1. Two-story colony (bees covering 15+ frames): - Use approx. 50 g per colony placed on the bottomboard or above the cluster until vapourization is complete.
2. One-story colony (bees covering 5-9 frames): - Use approx. 25 g per colony.
3. Nucleus hive (“nuc”) (bees covering 1-4 frames): - Use approx. 5-10 g per colony.

## **Menthol Applications for HBTM Control (spring or fall treatment):**

### **Menthol-shortening mixture:**

1. Menthol-shortening in cardboard (i.e. “menthol boards”): Commercial formulations are available as 20 g menthol boards or pads. Equal weight of menthol and shortening (ex: Crisco®) can be combined by adding menthol crystals to liquid shortening maintained at 65°C.
2. Sheets of corrugated cardboard (30 cm x 30 cm) are then immersed into the menthol-shortening mixture until the cardboard is saturated (approx. 20 g of menthol). The cardboard is then removed and cooled (and can be frozen in plastic bags until needed).
3. One sheet of cardboard placed on the bottom board may need to be replaced once or twice a week depending on how fast it vapourizes. The recommended treatment period is approximately 2 weeks.

### **Menthol crystals:**

1. Menthol crystals in a porous bag: Commercial formulations are available (ex: Mite-A-Thol®) in dosages of 50 g per porous bag, where one packet per hive is applied on the top bars of the upper corner of the brood box for a minimum of 28 days. The bag may also be placed on the bottom board (especially if outside temperature is hot) unless otherwise stated on the label.
2. The menthol crystals (50 g) may also be placed on a piece of aluminum foil which is folded over a piece of wire mesh (15 cm x 15 cm) to enclose the menthol and allow vaporization. The packet can be placed above the cluster or on the bottom board.

## **\*\* VOLUNTARY PESTICIDE INCIDENT REPORTING \*\***

Beekeepers can report pesticide incidents that result in observable symptoms or effect on honey bees. Incidents may include in-hive as well as field crop incidents. For general information on how to file a pesticide incident report, feel free to contact the Provincial Apiarist.

Please note that the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) is ultimately responsible for investigating and regulating pesticides. The Pesticide Incident Reporting Form (Environmental Incident) used to report pesticide impact to bees can be found on the following website: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pest/part/protect-proteger/incident/index-eng.php> or contact the Pest Management Information Service Centre: 1-800-267-6315.

## **\*\* LABORATORY DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES \*\***

### *Broad-spectrum Disease Diagnostic Services:*

National Bee Diagnostic Centre  
P.O. Box 1118  
1 Research Road  
Beaverlodge, AB T0H 0C0  
Phone: 1-780-357-7737 (Alberta)  
Fax: 1-780-354-8080  
Email: NBDC@gprc.ab.ca  
Website: <http://www.thenbdc.ca>

### *Varroa and Nosema Diagnostic Services in Manitoba*

D.W. Consultant  
326 Belvidere St.  
Winnipeg, MB R3J 2H3  
Phone: 204-229-9343  
Email : d.l.wright@shaw.ca

*Have a Great Beekeeping Year!*