

Bee medicaments

Honeybees are classified as a food producing animal so due care must be taken with anything introduced into a hive so that it does not contaminate honey or any other hive products for human consumption. Today beekeepers regularly use medicines and other products to control pests and diseases. Use of these medicines is controlled by statute and statutory approval is regulated by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate. This sheet is intended to offer some basic guidance about them and the records of purchase, use and disposal that must be maintained.

What are 'approved medicines'?

These are treatments that are intended to control a disease or pest in a bee hive. They will have undergone a registration process to ensure that they are safe to use. Some may require a veterinary prescription whilst others are freely available over the counter. At the time of writing the following are the only approved medicines for use with honeybees in the UK:

Fumidil B®, for the treatment of *Nosema apis* and *N. cerana*

Apistan®, Bayvarol®, Apiguard®, Api Life Var® and Thymovar® for the control of *Varroa destructor*.
**Resistance to these products has been confirmed in the U.K.*

They are all available 'over the counter' from bee equipment suppliers, however with forthcoming legislation they will have to be obtained through a Specially Qualified Person. At present there are no UK approved bee medicaments that are prescription only medicines. An up to date list and further information can be found at; <http://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/public/bee.aspx>

Can I use products that are available in Europe and elsewhere?

Where UK approved products are ineffective or unsuitable a Veterinary Surgeon can prescribe, using the cascade principal, products approved elsewhere in the EU. E.g. Apivar and Checkmite+ for varroa control. In some circumstances he can prescribe other products and those approved outside the EU. Usually the vet has to obtain an import license and import the product for you.

How about using formic acid pads?

Formic acid treatments of honeybees are considered to be fumigants so do not fall into the medicinal window. However this substance is extremely hazardous.

How about using oxalic acid?

This is currently used by many beekeepers to control varroa in winter. It is classed in EU legislation as an 'Annex II' product so it may be prescribed by a veterinary surgeon under the cascade principle. A commercially prepared oxalic acid based treatment 'Oxuvlar', which is approved for use in at least one EU country, is available.

What is the situation with hive cleansers?

There are products available, known as 'hive cleansers', which make no medicinal claims so are not considered to be honeybee medicaments. If you choose to use them it is good practice to follow label instructions and maintain a record in case residues are found in your hive products.

What records should I keep?

Current legislation requires that you keep a record of the purchase, use and disposal of any honeybee medicines. On the reverse of this FAQ is a record sheet, which meets all record keeping requirements laid down in Veterinary Medicines Legislation, that you can copy and use. You may however wish to incorporate it into your apiary records so make sure you record all the mandatory requirements listed and that you keep them for at least five years.

This form is also available as a pdf at www.nationalbeeunit.com

No mention of a treatment should be taken as an endorsement of efficacy, safety or a recommendation to treat.

Do not use homemade concoctions.

National Bee Unit

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VETERINARY MEDICINE ADMINISTRATION RECORD – TO BE KEPT FOR AT LEAST 5 YEARS

NAME AND FULL ADDRESS OF PERSON KEEPING RECORD	NAME:	<i>NBU ID No:</i>
ADDRESS:	<i>TEL NO:</i>	
POSTCODE:	<i>E MAIL:</i>	APIARY NAME / MAP REFERENCE:

TO BE COMPLETED AT TIME OF PURCHASE						TO BE COMPLETED AT TIME OF ADMINISTRATION							
Name and Address of Supplier of Medicinal Product	Date Purchased	Identity and Quantity of Medicinal Product				Date of Administration	Identification of Animal or Batch of Animals Treated		<i>Date treatment finished</i>	<i>Date withdrawal period ended</i>	Name of person administering veterinary medicine	Total quantity of veterinary medicine used	Date, quantity & route of disposal if not administered
		Name	Batch No	Quantity	Withdrawal Period		ID	<i>Number Treated</i>					

NB:

- Columns headed in italics relate to information which is NOT a statutory requirement but will assist to meet some Farm Assurance Scheme requirements.
- Proof of Purchase of all veterinary medicinal products must be kept.

These are general guidance notes only, and cannot be taken as an authoritative view of the law – further information can be obtained from Veterinary Medicines Directorate. Woodham Lane, New Haw, Addlestone, Surrey. KT15.3LS. Telephone: 01932 336911. www.vmd.defra.gov.uk