



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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**COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT**

**Community proposal for a new Chapter for the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code  
concerning the small hive beetle.**

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### **Community proposal for a new Chapter for the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code concerning the small hive beetle.**

#### **MEMORANDUM TO THE COMMISSION**

The Bureau of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission (Code Commission) met at the OIE Headquarters from 28 June to 2 July 2004. A report has been drafted which has proposed certain modifications to the Code and a request to the European Community to draft a proposal for a new Chapter to the Terrestrial Animal Health Code concerning the small hive beetle (*Aethina Tumida*).

The Commission held a small expert working group meeting on 9 November 2004 and a proposal for such a Chapter has been agreed between the Community experts attending the meeting.

The Commission therefore proposes to the Council to authorise the Commission to present to the OIE the attached proposal in the Annex before the 16 January 2005 for the next meeting of the Code Commission. This is in order to allow the Code Commission to take the Community proposal into account during their meeting before the final version is submitted to the OIE General Session.

The cover letter to be sent with our response is attached at Annex A (Doc D(2005) 520011).

## ANNEX A



UNION EUROPEENNE

Bruxelles, le  
D(2005) 520011 HLB/vb

**Subject : Community proposal for a new Chapter for the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code concerning the small hive beetle.**

Dear Director General,

Please find attached as an Annex a Community proposal for a new Chapter for the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code concerning the small hive beetle (*Aethina Tumida*) as requested by the OIE Standards Commission during a meeting held in Paris, 28 June to 2 July 2004 (see point 6 Section 2.9. headed “bee diseases” in the report of the above meeting) for the next meeting of the Code Commission scheduled for January 2005 concerning the preparation for the Annual General Session to be held in May 2005.

I trust you will find this draft useful and hope that it will be able to be incorporated into the Code during the next General Session.

Kind regards

Dr. Jaana Husu-Kallio

*Deputy Director General*

Annex: 2

Copies: All Directors/Chief Veterinary Officers of the Community, Andorra, Bulgaria, Iceland, Norway, Romania and Switzerland.

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## ANNEX

### CHAPTER 2.9.X.

#### AETHINA TUMIDA (SMALL HIVE BEETLE) INFESTATION OF HONEY BEES

##### Article 2.9.X.1.

For the purposes of this chapter, small hive beetle (SHB) is an infestation of bee colonies by the beetle *Aethina Tumida*, which is an ectoparasite affecting populations of the honey bee *Apis mellifera* L. It can also parasitise bumble bee *Bombus Terrestris* colonies under experimental conditions, and although infestation has not been demonstrated in wild populations, *Bombus* spp. must also be considered to be susceptible to infestation.

The adult beetle is attracted to bee colonies to reproduce, although it can survive and reproduce independently in other natural environments, using other food supplies as its nutritional source, including certain types of fruit. Hence once it is established within a localised environment, it is extremely difficult to eradicate.

The life cycle of *Aethina Tumida* begins with the adult beetle laying eggs within infested hives- these are usually laid in irregular masses in hive crevices or brood combs. After 2-6 days, the eggs hatch and the emerging larvae begin to feed voraciously on brood comb, bee eggs, pollen and honey within the hive. The SHB has a high reproductive potential. Each female can produce about 1,000 eggs in its four to six months of life. At maturation (approximately 10-29 days after hatching), the larvae exit the hive and burrow into soil around the hive entrance. Adult beetle emerge after an average of 3-4 weeks, although pupation can take between 8 and 60 days depending on temperature and moisture levels (usually takes 3 to 4 weeks).

The life span of an adult beetle depends on environmental conditions such as temperature and humidity, but in practice, adult beetles can live for at least 6 months, and in favourable reproductive conditions, the female is capable of laying new egg batches every 5-12 weeks. The beetle is able to survive at least two weeks without food and 50 days on brood combs.

Early signs of infestation may go unnoticed, but the growth in the beetle population is rapid, leading to high mortality in the hive. Because *Aethina Tumida* can be found and can thrive within the natural environment, and can fly up to a distance of 6-13km from its nest site, it is capable of dispersing rapidly and directly colonising hives. This includes following or accompanying swarms. It also does not require direct contact between adult bees to spread infestation. However, the movement of adult bees, honeycomb and other apiculture products may all cause infestations to spread to previously unaffected colonies.

[Standards for diagnostic tests are described in the *Terrestrial Manual*.]

##### Article 2.9.X.2.

The *Aethina Tumida* status of a country or zone can only be determined after considering the following criteria:

- 1) a risk assessment has been conducted, identifying all potential factors for *Aethina Tumida* occurrence and their historic perspective; including disease/pest incidence data from permanent official sanitary surveillance of apiaries programme

- 2) *Aethina Tumida* infestation should be notifiable in the whole country , and all clinical signs suggestive of *Aethina Tumida* infestation should be subjected to field and laboratory investigations;
- 3) On-going awareness and training programmes should be in place to encourage reporting of all cases suggestive of *Aethina Tumida* infestation;
- 4) the *Veterinary Administration* or other competent authority with responsibility for the health of honey bees should have current knowledge of, and authority over, all domesticated apiaries in the country.

Article 2.9.X.3.

**Country or zone free from *Aethina Tumida***

1) Historically free status

A country or zone may be considered free from the disease after conducting a risk assessment as referred to in Article 2.9.X.2. but without formally applying a specific surveillance programme if the country or zone complies with the provisions of Article 3.8.1.2.

2) Free status as a result of an eradication programme

A country or zone which does not meet the conditions of point 1) above may be considered free from *Aethina Tumida* infestation after conducting a risk assessment as referred to in Article 2.9.X.2. and when:

- a) the *Veterinary Administration* or other competent authority with responsibility for the health of honey bees has current knowledge of, and authority over, all domesticated apiaries existing in the country or zone;
- b) *Aethina Tumida* infestation is notifiable in the whole country or zone, and any clinical cases suggestive of *Aethina Tumida* infestation are subjected to field and laboratory investigations; a contingency plan is in place describing controls and inspection activities;
- c) for the 5 years following the last reported case of *Aethina Tumida* infestation, an annual survey supervised by the *Veterinary Administration*, with negative results, have been carried out on a representative sample of apiaries in the country or zone to provide a confidence level of at least 95% of detecting *Aethina Tumida* infestation if at least 1% of the apiaries were infected at a within-apiary prevalence rate of at least 5% of the hives; such surveys may be targeted towards areas with a higher likelihood of infestation;
- d) to maintain free status, an annual survey supervised by the *Veterinary Administration*, with negative results, is carried out on a representative sample of apiaries in the country or zone to indicate that there has been no new *cases*; such surveys may be targeted towards areas with a higher likelihood of infestation;
- e) all equipment associated with previously infected apiaries has been destroyed, or cleaned and sterilised to ensure the destruction of *Aethina Tumida* spp., in conformity with one of the procedures referred to in Appendix XXX (under study);
- f) the soil and undergrowth in the immediate vicinity of all infected apiaries has been treated with a soil drench or similar suitable treatment that is efficacious in destroying incubating *Aethina Tumida* larvae and pupae;
- g) the importation of the *commodities* listed in this Chapter into the country or zone is carried out, in conformity with the recommendations of this Chapter.

Article 2.9.X.4.

Regardless of the status of the *exporting country* with regard to *Aethina Tumida* infestation, *Veterinary Administrations* should authorise without restriction the import or transit through their territory of the following commodities:

- 1) honey bee semen and honey bee venom;
- 2) extracted honey, refined or rendered beeswax, propolis and royal jelly

Article 2.9.X.5.

*Veterinary Administrations of importing countries* should require:

for individual consignments containing a single live queen honey bee, accompanied by a small number of associated attendants (a maximum of 20 attendants per queen)

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the bees come from a country or zone officially free from *Aethina Tumida* infestation,

or

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* including an attestation from the competent authority of the exporting third country stating that:

- the bees come from hives or colonies which were inspected immediately prior to dispatch and show no clinical signs or suspicion of the presence of *Aethina Tumida* or its eggs, larvae or pupae,
- come from an area of at least 100km radius where no apiary has been subject to any restrictions associated with the occurrence of *Aethina Tumida* for the previous 6 months, and
- the bees and accompanying packaging presented for export have been thoroughly and individually inspected and do not contain *Aethina Tumida* or its eggs, larvae or pupae.

Article 2.9.X.6.

*Veterinary Administrations of importing countries* should require:

for live worker bees, drone bees or bee colonies with or without associated brood combs

- the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the bees come from a country or zone officially free from *Aethina Tumida* infestation, and
- the bees and accompanying packaging presented for export have been inspected and do not contain *Aethina Tumida* or its eggs, larvae or pupae.

Article 2.9.X.7.

*Veterinary Administrations of importing countries* should require:

for eggs, larvae and pupae of honey bees

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the products:

- were sourced from a free country or zone (under study);

or

- have been isolated from queens in a quarantine station, and
- are from hives or come from hives or colonies which were inspected immediately prior to entry into the quarantine station and show no clinical signs or suspicion of the presence of *Aethina Tumida* or its eggs or larvae or pupae then and during the quarantine period.

Article 2.9.X.8.

*Veterinary Administrations of importing countries* should require:

for used equipment associated with beekeeping

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the equipment:

- comes from a country or zone free from *Aethina Tumida* infestation; and
- contains no live honey bees or bee brood.

or

- contains no live honey bees or bee brood;
- has been thoroughly cleaned, and treated to ensure the destruction of *Aethina Tumida* spp., in conformity with one of the procedures referred to in Appendix XXX (under study); and
- all precautions have been taken to prevent infestation/contamination.

Article 2.9.X.9.

*Veterinary Administrations of importing countries* should require:

for honey-bee collected pollen and beeswax (in the form of honeycomb)

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the products:

- comes from a country or zone free from *Aethina Tumida* infestation; and
- contains no live honey bees or bee brood.

or

- contains no live honey bees or bee brood;
- has been thoroughly cleaned, and treated to ensure the destruction of *Aethina Tumida* spp., in conformity with one of the procedures referred to in Appendix XXX (under study); and
- all precautions have been taken to prevent infestation/contamination.

Article 2.9.X.10.

*Veterinary Administrations of importing countries* should require:

for comb honey

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the products:

- comes from a country or zone free from *Aethina Tumida* infestation; and
- contains no live honey bees or bee brood.

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