

# Bee Diseases and their Management



## Baldbrood

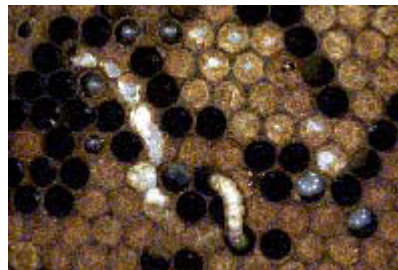
(This is not a notifiable disease)

Bald Brood is a condition where normal looking live pupae are visible through incompletely capped cells. Normally developing pupae are usually sealed in their cells under wax cappings 8-9 days after laying.

The most usual cause of bald brood is wax moth *Galleria mellonella* (both the lesser and greater) larvae tunnelling below the surface of the comb. The larvae will perforate the cappings, which are then chewed down by the worker bees; sometimes these partial cappings have a raised lip protruding from the comb surface. These uncapped larvae will usually emerge as fully developed adults, although a few malformed adults may result from contaminants becoming deposited on the developing larvae.

Another cause of bald brood is genetic, where the worker bees do not cap the cells properly, either turning the cell edges inward or leaving a small hole in the centre of the capping.

### Recognition:



The partial capping on cells suffering from Bald Brood have raised lips that protrude from the comb.

Wax Moth Larvae may be present on inspection

### Vectors

- Beekeepers - Transferring contaminated equipment / material between hives, colonies and apiary sites.

## How to Manage Bald Brood Disease

Bald Brood is a condition where normal looking live pupae are visible through incompletely capped cells. Normally developing pupae are usually sealed in their cells under wax cappings 8-9 days after laying.

Please obtain an up to date copy of the CSL 'Foul brood diseases of honey bees' booklet by visiting the DEFRA website or downloading direct from SBA website.

### Detection

**Hive Examination** - Examination of brood frames and floor debris is required especially in spring. Bees should be gently shaken from the frames to allow full inspection, abnormalities such as uncapped larvae are then easily spotted.

### Monitoring

Vigilance is important with all honeybee diseases and conditions. Check all apiaries and colonies regularly for health and suspect any colonies that are not thriving where there is no already known reason. Colonies that die out should be examined thoroughly and sealed to prevent robbing and spread of any disease present.



## Controls

There is no specific treatment recommended for Bald Brood however treating for Wax Moth will aid in the prevention of Bald Brood. Prevention is the best method of controlling this condition by maintaining healthy, strong and vigorous colonies that display good hygienic traits. Good husbandry contributes greatly to overall colony behaviour and health, thereby avoiding the conditions in which Bald Brood can develop. Colonies that suffer excessively from Bald Brood may need to be re-queened, the combs destroyed and hive components disinfected before re-use.

**Note: Moth balls and crystals (naphthalene) should not be used to control wax moth.**

## Apiary Housekeeping:

- Always maintain a high level of hygiene in all your beekeeping practices
- Carry out methodical health inspections on a regular basis, checking for brood disease particularly in spring and autumn.
- Never transfer combs between colonies without checking for brood diseases
- Systematically replace old brood combs in your hives melting down the old comb to maintain clean and healthy brood.
- Never bring colonies or equipment into your apiary without establishing their origin, condition, and disease status.
- Sterilise any second-hand equipment or hive components before introducing them into your apiary
- Discourage drifting and robbing in the apiary
- Suspect stray swarm health until you know otherwise
- Report any incidence of disease or suspicious conditions immediately to your local association