

Varroa Mite Incursion in Fiji



The Biosecurity Authority of Fiji (BAF) recently declared 10 farms positive for varroa mite infestation in the Central Division and one farm positive for varroa mite infestation in the Rakiraki area.

Varroa mite species called *Varroa jacobsoni* has been confirmed positive in Fiji. It is an external parasite that attacks both adult bees and the developing honey bee larvae. Mites feed on bee blood and make them weak or deformed. Mites can also transmit viruses that can kill bees. They can cause a condition known as *Parasitic Mite Syndrome* (PMS), which can kill colonies within months of infestation.

BAF is working closely with the Ministry of Agriculture on a joint operation programme to control the *Varroa jacobsoni* mite population in Fiji with the ultimate goal of its eradication from Fiji. BAF therefore requests support from farmers and the public in identifying infested beehives. This will assist BAF's team in containing varroa mites in infested areas which will prevent further spreading of Varroa mites to non-infested areas.

Currently, BAF's surveillance team is working on determining the infestation of Varroa mites at country level. Below are things you can do to assist BAF in eradicating Varroa mite from Fiji:

- Do not move beehives/ nucleus/ queen , and used apicultural equipment;
- Contact BAF if you see anyone moving beehives/ nucleus/ queen and used apicultural equipment;
- Contact BAF if you are suspicious of Varroa mite infestation at your bee farm; and
- For further clarifications do not hesitate to contact team at BAF Headquarters on 3312512 and Hotline on 5997 (toll free) or alternatively, on email: info@baf.com.fj.

Warning: Biosecurity Is your Responsibility. Heavy Penalties apply

NB: Pursuant to sections 94 of the Biosecurity Act, any person who contravenes any direction made pursuant to this alert, commits an offence and is liable for the penalties prescribed under Schedule 5 of the Biosecurity Act 2008.

