

The threat of varroa mite

Varroa mite, *Varroa jacobsoni* is a serious external parasite of honeybees. Varroa mite damages honeybees through feeding on the brood and adult bees and transmitting various diseases. The Varroa mite infested colonies are significantly weakened and usually cannot survive for more than one or two years. Varroa mite poses a threat to the agricultural and forestry industries through the damaging effects it has on honeybees and pollination. There is a potential risk of varroa mites invading all the areas with honeybees in Fiji if appropriate measures are not adopted by the beekeepers.

What is varroa mite?

- *Varroa jacobsoni* is about 1.1 mm long, 1.5 mm wide and brownish in colour.
- It is usually found inside the capped drone brood cells and worker brood cells, as well as on adult bees.



Varroa jacobsoni

A. dorsal view, B. ventral view

Where you can find Varroa mites?

Varroa mites are widespread and found in Asia (including Indonesia, the Philippines, and Malaysia), Africa, North, South and Central America, the Caribbean, Europe, Oceania. In Papua New Guinea, a strain of *Varroa jacobsoni* has been found that has switched hosts and reproduces on European honeybees (*Apis mellifera*). *Varroa jacobsoni* is recorded from Australia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands (<http://www.pestnet.org>), Vanuatu (*PHAMA Technical Report 34*) and Fiji.



Varroa mites on pupae

How does varroa mite spread?

- Short-distance spread of varroa mites among colonies is mainly the result of swarming, drifting workers and/or drones and robbing of weak colonies.
- The movement of beehives/nucs, tools and queen shipment are the key factors for the long-distance spread of varroa mites.



Infested beehive with Varroa mites

What should I do if I found varroa mites?

You can help us eradicate varroa mites. If you have seen it or suspect you have seen it, please contact Biosecurity Authority of Fiji (BAF) via Hotline on 5997 (toll free).

November 2018

For Further Information Please Contact:

Biosecurity Authority of Fiji on 33 125 12 or
Short Code:

Animal Disease Surveillance-5997

or Email-info@baf.com.fj or visit BAF website www.baf.com.fj