

FAQ for NIHBS/NUIG Varroa Tolerance Breeding Programme

Q. Who do I contact in NUIG?

A. Keith Browne. Tel. 091 494490/ 089 200 4762 or nuigbeerresearch@gmail.com

Q. Who do I contact in NIHBS?

A. Your regional organiser: leinster@nihbs.org, ulster@nihbs.org, munster@nihbs.org, Connaught@nihbs.org

Q. How often must I do the Varroa count?

A. Twice a year.

Q. When must I do the count?

A. Before you treat for Varroa.

Ideally, Count 1 between 7th & 22nd May & Count 2 between 13th & 28th August.

Q. Where can I learn how to do the Sugar Shaker method?

A. Keith Browne will demonstrate Sugar Shaker method & give talk on programme at OBKA apiary in Charleville estate, Tullamore on 15th May at 1.00 p.m. All welcome.

Q. How long does it take to do the Sugar Shaker test?

A. A few minutes per hive. It could add about 10 minutes to your inspection of a hive.

Q. Do I have to send bees away?

A. Yes, a sample of 10 bees per hive to be sent to NUIG in a matchbox.

Q. Do I send live bees?

A. No, please send dead bees.

Q. How do I prepare bees for posting?

A. Label matchbox with apiary name, hive no. beekeeper name and date of sampling. Collect bees. On your return home, put matchbox in fridge for approx. 20 minutes then into freezer. Use padded envelope to send full matchboxes to NUIG. Be sure that your contact address and/or phone number is included in the package.

Q. Why can't I put bees straight into freezer?

A. It is more humane to use fridge first. Also, if bees go straight into freezer, there will be a blob of frozen/defrosted honey in matchbox. Avoid this by using fridge first.

Q. How do I label matchbox?

A. Use biro or permanent marker. Writing should be clearly legible after freezing.

Q. Will training be offered around the country?

A. NIHBS events and workshops will usually offer training. Please request your Regional Organiser.

Q. Where do I get tubs for the Sugar Shaker test?

A. Your Regional Organiser should supply them. If not, contact NIHBS secretary nihbs.secretary@gmail.com

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Q. Will my bees be genotyped?

A. Only bee samples submitted by the core group of beekeepers can be genotyped due to the costs involved.

Q. How do I assess my colony's characteristics?

A. The assessment is based on the Hive record form developed by Galtee bee breeding group. It should reflect the usual characteristics of the colony, not just what you see on the day of assessment. The list of what to look for is on the inspections form and shown below.

DOCILITY: Non-jumping, non-stinging, non-following.

STEADINESS: Absence of running on comb

BROOD PATTERN: Brood compactness, Absence of empty cells.

POLLEN STORAGE: Pollen packed over, around and under broodness.

COMB BUILDING: Speed in occupying supers, drawing foundation, honey and quality of comb capping.

These characteristics are rated 0 to 5, from unsatisfactory to outstanding, as shown on the inspection form