



# National Bee Unit Confidentiality

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**The National Bee Unit (NBU) has observed confidentiality since the inception of Bee Disease Control Legislation. Today information held by the NBU about beekeepers is stored in a central database called BeeBase which conforms to the Data Protection Act 1998.**

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## What happens when my Bees are inspected?

During a routine Inspection the Bee Inspector will record your personal details, location of the apiary and details of the inspection on a form called a B2. Each beekeeper is allocated a unique beekeeper ID, which is used to identify him/her in the future, and link future inspections. The information collected during the inspection is placed and held on a secure database, called BeeBase.

## What is BeeBase?

The database used by the NBU is known as 'BeeBase'. The primary function of BeeBase is as a tool for the improvement of bee health across England, Wales and more recently Scotland. Secondly, BeeBase is an information resource for beekeepers, who can access advisory information to help them improve their understanding of beekeeping, and ultimately improve the health of their honey bee stocks. BeeBase also contains interesting historical information on bee inspections. Some information is open access, meaning publically available, and can be seen without logging into BeeBase. Examples are regional summaries of bee inspections in past seasons. Personal information collected by the Bee Inspector is stored in a secure section of the website, with restricted access.

## Do I have access to my record?

You can only access your record if you are personally registered on BeeBase as a beekeeper. To register, go to the NBU homepage and follow the links: [www.nationalbeeunit.com](http://www.nationalbeeunit.com). Once you are registered, you will have access to records of all current and future inspections carried out by NBU Bee Inspectors on your colonies. You will not have access to any inspections completed on colonies from other beekeepers. However, once registered with a current email address, you will receive a disease notification alert if a notifiable disease (European foulbrood or American foulbrood) is found within 3km of your apiaries.

### National Bee Unit

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Telephone 03003030094 email [nbuoffice@apha.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:nbuoffice@apha.gsi.gov.uk) NBU Web site:

[www.nationalbeeunit.com](http://www.nationalbeeunit.com)

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### **How can I be confident that my information is held securely?**

All levels of access to BeeBase are protected in the same way as on-line banking. Your personal access is password protected. When you first register you are allocated a temporary password, which is valid for your first visit only. You will then be prompted to set your own password. You need to ensure that your own password remains confidential.

### **Do the public have access to BeeBase?**

Yes, there are public pages containing useful information such as regional disease summaries, historic colony losses, advisory leaflets, useful links and much more information which may help improve bee health. However, the general public do not have access to your details.

### **Who else has access to my records?**

Your complete records can only be viewed by selected individuals with higher level access to BeeBase (e.g. Bee Inspectors, NBU office staff). The NBU collect data during their activities for the purpose of improving our understanding of honey bee health, and sometimes it is necessary to share with other organisations e.g. AHVLA – for the purposes of obtaining treatment certificates; or Natural England for the purpose of investigating poisoning incidents through the Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme (WIIS); or research establishments to understand disease spread. These organisations are bound by the same confidentiality agreements as the NBU.

### **What if a notifiable disease or pest is found during my inspection?**

Beekeepers are encouraged by APHA NBU Bee Inspectors to warn neighbouring beekeepers if disease is confirmed. The NBU disclose the presence of notifiable bee diseases to those registered beekeepers within 3km of disease via a disease notification alert. In addition, disease occurrences are released to the general public using summarised Ordnance Survey 10 x 10 kilometre squares.

### **Why don't you advise other beekeepers of my disease problem?**

There is a legitimate interest of other beekeepers to know of the presence of disease in an area but that interest has to be reconciled with the rights to privacy of the individual. Disease notification alerts are sent to all registered beekeepers in BeeBase with current email addresses, notifying them of disease found within 3km of their apiaries. Occasionally, upon request, details of parishes infected with foul brood are released but only where this information does not identify a beekeeper.

### **What if I have supplied others with bees that may be infected?**

The Bee Inspector dealing with your case will ask you for details of any stocks that you may have transferred to other beekeepers. These will be screened as a matter of urgency as part of the NBU Inspection Programme. The Inspector will not reveal where information about the transfer of disease was obtained or that a specific beekeeper or supplier has a pest or disease problem.

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### How is disease controlled?

The NBU controls the spread of American foulbrood by destruction and of European foulbrood by treatment (shook swarm or antibiotic treatment) of lightly infected colonies and by destruction of heavily or recurrently infected colonies. Once varroosis is established, it cannot be eradicated, but can be controlled. Spread of *Varroa* can be minimised only by all beekeepers either treating or managing their colonies in such a way that *Varroa* levels are kept low and dispersal minimised.

### Arrival of new exotic honey bee pests?

A surveillance programme for the notifiable pests Small hive beetle (*Aethina tumida*) and *Tropilaelaps spp.* are carried out annually. On discovery of either pest a Contingency Plan, available from BeeBase, will be implemented resulting in the commencement of a programme of destruction or control depending upon the type and extent of the infestation. Further details about pests and bee disease control can be obtained in our advisory leaflets available on BeeBase, free of charge from NBU Bee Inspectors or direct from the NBU office at York.

### How can I access BeeBase?

Go to the NBU website at [www.nationalbeeunit.com](http://www.nationalbeeunit.com). If you are a beekeeper please register to ensure that the information held about you is as accurate as possible. In the case of disease outbreaks this will enable you to be advised as soon as possible and also to ensure that your bees can be screened promptly. If you do not have internet access your local Seasonal or Regional Bee Inspector or the NBU main office at York will be pleased to ensure that you are registered in BeeBase.

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