

The Use of Authorised and Non-authorised Veterinary Products

There appears to be some confusion about the use of some hive cleaning products currently available on the market. Here at the National Bee Unit (NBU) we recommend that beekeepers only use authorised veterinary medicinal products which are presented for the treatment or prevention of disease. Products which claim to have that function must be authorised in accordance with the Veterinary Medicines Regulations (VMR) before they can be placed on the market. A list of UK authorised veterinary medicines can be searched on the Defra Veterinary Medicines Directorate's (VMD) product information database which is available on the VMD website at the following link: <http://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/ProductInformationDatabase/>.



The application of MAQS (Mite Away Quick Strips) placed on top bars.
Photo by Jason Learner.


There are certain products on the market that are labelled as hive sanitizers, cleaners or similar wording. Cleaning and sanitisation products should be used strictly for the cleaning of hives and should not be applied directly to the bees, but rather to the hive or hive equipment. In the majority of cases, these products are not authorised as veterinary medicinal products within the UK and therefore no formal testing for quality, efficacy and safety of the product may have taken place. Therefore, there is a danger they might be ineffective and harmful to bees, the beekeeper and the environment. Should residues from some of these ingredients be

found in honey intended for supply to consumers it may lead to the VMD taking enforcement action.

Authorised veterinary medicinal products are assessed by the VMD for the efficacy and quality of their ingredients, the release rate of the chemicals and the synergistic effects (how they react with other substances in the hive) that the products may have on a colony. Authorised products are also checked for their safety to the environment and the user. If you believe a product is being misused or marketed incorrectly you should contact the VMD, who is responsible for policing unauthorised products. At the NBU we strongly recommend that you use authorised, proven products to treat your bees; if you are in any doubt you should check for the product on the above link or contact your local NBU inspector or the NBU at York.

The VMD intends to review those products on the market which claim to be hive cleaning or sanitising products, to ensure they are not marketed in breach of the VMR. If you are a company that markets hive cleaners or sanitizers and require further information on the marketing of non-medicinal products, this can be found in *Veterinary Medicines Guidance Note Number 1 Controls of Veterinary Medicines* on the VMD website: <http://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/pdf/vmgn/VMGNote01.pdf>.

Jason Learner,
National Bee Unit and the Veterinary Medicines Directorate



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