

VAA Industry Liaison Officer Report 8/9/2023

It is over a week since beekeepers were permitted to move hives off almond pollination in the SEZ [purple zone] of the varroa IP's at Euston and Balranald in NSW. Almost all hives have been moved out or the Victorian sections under permit, to other sites in Victoria and NSW. Some are fulfilling other pollination contracts and others have moved to honey production.

I have not been posting many information emails as I have thought it is better the information comes straight from the Emergency Control Centre. Having said that by no means have I been sitting on my hands .

Unfortunately, yesterday Ag-Vic imposed a temporary hold on the transfer of bees and bee products into Victoria from NSW. I have been assured that it is only temporary but is a complete back flip from our conference where they stated that they would not be closing the border if varroa was found at the almond pollination. I know that both Ag-Vic and NSW DPI are under an enormous amount of pressure and this temporary closure is being put in place to give them a chance to catch up with the implementation of the eradication program in NSW and set in place inspection of bees from the SEZ in Victoria.

Many Victorian SQRT members are working on surveillance in NSW as we speak. It is anticipated that surveillance of hives from the almonds SEZ in Victoria will be conducted in October.

We have been asked, if we could reach out to our members and networks to ascertain whether there are apiarists who would be able to assist with the surveillance program proposed for October and November. There is still some uncertainty about the scope of the task required but Ag-Vic will work through that over the next week or so to get clarity on what the ask is. At this point in time, they are seeking expression of interest to ascertain what additional capacity in terms of apiary skills is out there to complement the SQRT. We will be in a position in a few weeks to confirm people's involvement and how this would work.

Beekeepers who would like to assist in way of involvement as a SQRT member can go to the VAA website where they will find a form ([linked here](#)), or you can SMS to me a text with your name, phone number and availability on 0428 621455. Presently we are still working to eradicate varroa so if you can spare some time to help with surveillance it would be greatly appreciated.

Please remember that, to get the latest varroa updates and all permit information go to the Ag-Vic web site under bees, then varroa. Don't forget to report any suspicious finding in your alcohol washes. We are working to get the border open again as soon as possible, so please be patient.

Regards, Phil McPherson
Industry Liaison Officer