

QUARANTINE AREA IN THE PEACE RIVER REGION ESTABLISHED FOR SMALL HIVE BEETLE FOUND IN HONEY BEE COLONIES

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On July 19, 2017, Alberta has established a quarantine area in the Peace River region where small hive beetle was detected in a beekeeping operation during an inspection. The pest has been linked to honey colonies that were imported from Ontario without the required permit.

The quarantined area in northern Alberta includes northern Big Lakes County, the southern area of Northern Sunrise County, and the eastern parts of the Municipal District of Smoky River and the Municipal District of Greenview. For details, please check quarantine maps

This quarantine has been put in place as a proactive measure to help prevent the spread of the beetle while an Agriculture and Forestry inspection team investigates to determine the level of infestation and actions are taken to deal with the detected pests including using traps to remove beetle from affected hives.

A total of 15 beekeeping operations within the 15 km flight radius of this pest are located within the quarantined area. While these beekeepers will not be able to move or sell honey bee colonies, bee nuclei and package bees out of the quarantine area for the duration of the quarantine, they can continue with their day-to-day operations and can continue sell honey as usual. Any bee colonies moved into the quarantine area during this period will be subject to the same restrictions

The quarantine will initially be in place for 45 days, and could be lifted if two consecutive inspections of bees in the quarantine area show that hives are free of small hive beetle. The quarantine period could also be extended if necessary.

The small hive beetle is a predator and scavenger of honey bees and their colonies. In significant quantities, the beetle can cause problems in bee colonies and honey extraction by damaging combs and wax capping, which can spoil honey. The beetle can spread through the movement of honey bee colonies and equipment.

As an emerging pest, the small hive beetle is an immediately notifiable pest under the Federal *Animal Health Act*, and as a listed pest under the *Alberta Bee Act* and Regulations. To date, the beetle has not been found in Alberta since 2006 when an accidental introduction from imported package bees from Australia was reported. Agriculture and Forestry was able to eradicate it by the following spring.

Agriculture and Forestry staff will continue to work with affected beekeepers, the beekeeping industry and other stakeholders to manage this pest. The current risk remains low for most Alberta beekeepers if they are following the provincial regulations and best management practices.

This incident is a good reminder for all beekeepers to be vigilant to prevent the establishment and spread of this pest in Alberta. Best management practices include:

- Importing or moving bees through the proper channels and with appropriate health certification and permits from the Provincial Apiculturist.
- Understanding details of the small hive beetle's lifecycle and recognizing larvae and adult beetles.
- Being vigilant and looking out for the small hive beetle whenever examining bee colonies as a part of routine management. Early detection means beekeepers are more likely to be successful in controlling the pest.
- Good apiary management practices including maintaining strong colonies, good hygiene practices, and changing extraction and honey handling procedures to protect honey from fermentation and becoming rotten.
- Any suspected findings of the small hive beetle must be reported immediately to the Provincial Apiculturist.

Any questions related to small hive beetle and its management in Alberta can be directed to Medhat Nasr, PhD., Provincial Apiculturist: Office Phone: 780-415-2314, Cell Phone: 780-554-1566, email: medhat.nasr@gov.ab.ca.

Links and resources:

[Alberta Apiculture Home Page](#)

[Recommendations for Management of Honey Bee Diseases and Pests in Alberta](#)

[Canadian Honey Bee Producer Guide to the National Bee Farm-level Biosecurity Standard](#)

[The small hive beetle \(a UK National Bee Unit Publication\)](#)