

National Bee Unit

FAQ 45

Apiguard

In June 2003 Apiguard, manufactured by Vita (Europe) Ltd, was formally registered as a veterinary medicine to control varroa. It is based on thymol, formulated in a gel base. It is supplied packaged in shallow foil trays about 75 mm. square with peel-off lids. It is important that the manufacturers instructions are followed.

These notes are intended to help you maximise its benefits.

Experimental trials carried in mainland Europe have shown Apiguard to have an efficacy of between 74% and 99%. As it works against pyrethroid resistant mites it has been widely used in continental Europe following the discovery of such resistance there.

In use, a tray is opened and is placed on the top bars of the hive. Bees must have free access to the tray, so generally it will be necessary to place a shallow eke or empty super under the crown board to make sure that bees can gain easy access to the tray. Bees seem to find Apiguard repellent so they enter the tray and remove the gel from the colony. In doing so they spread the active ingredient around the hive where it is thought to act both by contact and evaporation. Usually it takes several days for the tray to be emptied. A second tray is normally applied after 14 days.

An important point to bear in mind is that the efficacy of Apiguard in controlling varroa is best at temperatures over 15°C. Below this temperature it continues to have a beneficial effect, but is less effective. Therefore it is best used before the weather gets cold in autumn. If the temperature is consistently higher than 25°C then the dose should be halved.

One question often asked is what happens when you use Apiguard in conjunction with an open mesh floor rather than a conventional solid floor? At the moment it is impossible to give a reliable answer as no data exist. However as thymol vapour is heavier than air it would seem prudent to close off an open mesh

P.T.O.

National Bee Unit
Food and Environment Research Agency
Sand Hutton, York. YO41 1 LZ

Telephone 01 904 462 510 e mail nbu@fera.gsi.gov.uk

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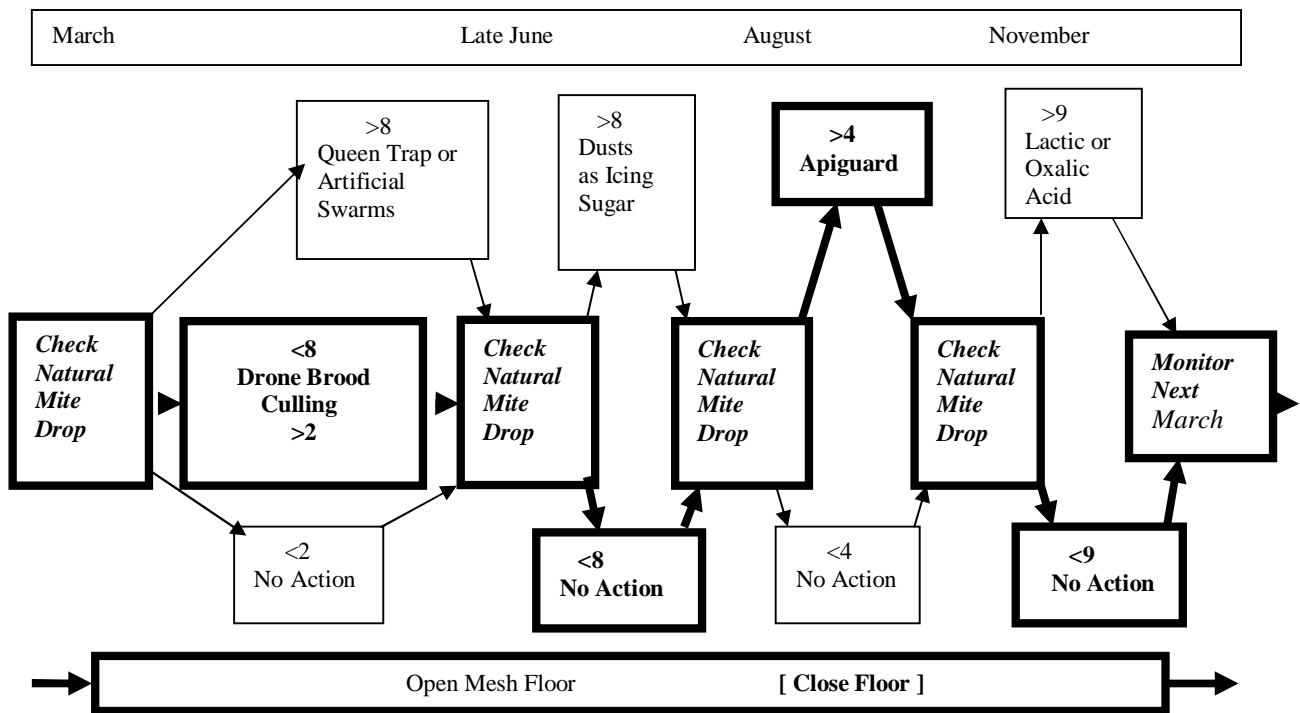
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floor whilst treatment is in progress. Inserting the monitoring tray or just putting some sheet material under the floor could do this.

With an efficacy of between 74% & 99% Apiguard may not always be sufficient when used alone as a single annual treatment. It is however ideal for use as part of an integrated approach as illustrated in the diagram below. This does look complicated but in most uses the likely actions are highlighted in bold lines. The other control methods shown would probably only be used if there was an invasion of mites from elsewhere.

Flow chart for probable use of Apiguard in an Integrated Varroa Management programme.



N.B. Mite drop figures refer to the average drop per day.

Details of IPM, monitoring varroa mites and the other control methods are available in the Fera/NBU/Defra leaflet 'Managing Varroa', various NBU FAQ sheets and books on varroa control.

For beekeepers who live in areas where pyrethroid resistant varroa mites have not yet been identified it would appear prudent for those relying on pyrethroid treatments i.e. Apistan and Bayvarol, to alternate these with a control such as Apiguard. This would slow the spread of resistance, thus maintaining the efficacy of pyrethroids for longer.

Apiguard is also sold in buckets. The registration does not apply to this package. Please ensure that the instructions are followed and be especially careful to regulate the dose correctly.