

Veterinary Hive Inspection Protocol

Updated: October, 2021

You can find video instructions at:

<https://ag.umass.edu/resources/pollinators/resources-for-veterinarians>

1. Make sure that you have your inspection equipment ready [\[VIDEO\]](#)
 - a. **Including:** [Apiary inspection form](#), veil, hive tool, smoker, diagnostic guide, sanitizing materials (rubbing alcohol, steel wool), disease sampling materials (Q-tips, paper bags), and an alcohol wash kit (jar with mesh lid, rubbing alcohol, half-cup measure, dish pan). [Email bees@mass.gov for a free mite wash kit]
2. Greet the beekeeper and explain the inspection process
3. Check the hive entrance to gauge colony activity. Smoke hive entrance and open hive
4. Assess nectar and pollen provisions in upper hive boxes
5. Inspect brood frames, looking for:
 - a. Presence of a queen: do you see queen or eggs? [\[VIDEO\]](#)
 - b. Brood diseases and brood pattern: look at both open and capped brood. Is the pattern solid or spotty? Do the larva and pupae look healthy, with no signs of disease (yellow or milky larvae, punctured/chewed down pupae, etc.)? [\[VIDEO\]](#)
 - c. If you suspect brood disease, obtain a brood sample using a Q-tip or toothpick, and place it a paper bag. After completing the inspection, mail the bag to the USDA lab in Beltsville Maryland (address at the end of document). [\[VIDEO\]](#) [More information about common diseases [HERE](#)]
 - d. If you suspect EFB or AFB, you can also use a rapid field test, like a Vita kit, to confirm. However, even if the test is negative, make sure to submit a sample to the USDA lab.
 - e. If you suspect EFB or AFB, sanitize equipment and change gloves after you complete the hive inspection [review our recommended biosecurity protocols [HERE](#)]. Tell the beekeeper to keep the hive closed until they receive the results of the lab test. Contact the MDAR Apiary team to alert them of the potential diagnosis.
6. Conduct an alcohol wash, and gather a *Nosema* sample, if suspected [\[VIDEO\]](#)
7. Email bees@mass.gov to report your inspection results

This resource was created by UMass Extension, in collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture and The Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University.

For more honey bee veterinary resources visit:

<https://aq.umass.edu/resources/pollinators/resources-for-veterinarians>

To learn more about the project visit:

<https://aq.umass.edu/resources/pollinators/research-projects-at-umass/ma-bee-veterinarian-project>

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