

National Bee Unit

Bee medicines

April 2024

To prevent contamination of honey, which may be intended for human consumption, only products that have been authorised by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) can be legally applied to honey bee colonies without a veterinary prescription. This fact sheet lists the authorised medicines that can be legally used by beekeepers on honey bee colonies in the UK without a veterinary prescription.

What are ‘authorised medicines’?

In the UK, there are a number of treatments available ‘over the counter’. However, not all of these will have gone through an assessment process to ensure that they are safe to the user, colony and environment, and to ensure that they are efficacious. To ensure you are using an authorised product, please consult the table below. A more detailed and up to date list can also be found by selecting 'Honey Bees' as the species at: www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/ProductInformationDatabase/search.

Can I use products that are available in Europe and elsewhere?

When products are not authorised and/or available in the UK to treat or prevent a disease in bees, a veterinary surgeon can apply for a Special Import Certificate (SIC) to import a medicine that is authorised for such use in another country.

Can I use generic natural substances to treat my colonies?

Anything that is placed in a hive to control or eradicate a pest or disease is classed as a medicine and, unless prescribed by a veterinary surgeon, must be authorised according to the Veterinary Medicines Regulations (2013). Therefore, without a veterinary prescription, it is an offence to administer unauthorised products and/or home-made preparations (e.g., generic "raw" oxalic acid crystals, self-made thymol solutions).

What records should I keep?

Beekeepers are legally required to maintain a record of any medicines they purchase, use and dispose of. At the bottom of this fact sheet, there is a Veterinary

Medicines Administration Record sheet, which meets all legal requirements of the Veterinary Medicines Regulations (2013). You may wish to incorporate it into your apiary records. Make sure you record all the listed mandatory requirements. Records should be kept for at least five years, irrespective of whether or not the colony concerned is no longer in that keeper's possession or has died during that period. This form is also available as a [pdf](#).

At the time of writing, the following medicines are approved for use with honey bees in the UK:

Name of Treatment	Active Ingredients	For the control of
Apiguard (gel)	Thymol	<i>Varroa</i>
Apilife-VAR (strips)	Thymol and essential oils (camphor, eucalyptus and menthol)	<i>Varroa</i>
Apistan (strips)	Tau fluvalinate	<i>Varroa</i>
Api-Bioxal (powder)	Oxalic acid dihydrate	<i>Varroa</i>
Api-Bioxal (solution)*	Oxalic acid dihydrate	<i>Varroa</i>
Apitraz (strips)	Amitraz	<i>Varroa</i>
Apivar (strips)	Amitraz	<i>Varroa</i>
Dany's BienenWohl (powder and solution)	Oxalic acid dihydrate	<i>Varroa</i>
Formic pro (strips)	Formic acid	<i>Varroa</i>
Oxugar (concentrate for solution)	Oxalic acid dihydrate	<i>Varroa</i>
Oxybee (powder and solution)	Oxalic acid dihydrate	<i>Varroa</i>
Thymovar (strips)	Thymol	<i>Varroa</i>
VarroMed (solutions)	Formic acid, oxalic acid dihydrate	<i>Varroa</i>

*Authorised in GB only

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VETERINARY MEDICINE ADMINISTRATION RECORD – TO BE KEPT FOR AT LEAST 5 YEARS

NAME AND FULL ADDRESS OF PERSON KEEPING RECORD	NAME:	NBU ID No:
ADDRESS:	TEL NO:	
POSTCODE:	E MAIL:	APIARY NAME / MAP REFERENCE:

TO BE COMPLETED AT TIME OF PURCHASE						TO BE COMPLETED AT TIME OF ADMINISTRATION							
Name and Address of Supplier of Medicinal Product	Date Purchased	Identity and Quantity of Medicinal Product				Date of Administration	Identification of Animal or Batch of Animals Treated		<i>Date treatment finished</i>	<i>Date withdrawal period ended</i>	Name of person administering veterinary medicine	Total quantity of veterinary medicine used	Date, quantity & route of disposal if not administered
		Name	Batch No	Quantity	Withdrawal Period		ID	<i>Number Treated</i>					

NB: Columns headed in italics relate to information which is NOT a statutory requirement but will assist to meet some Farm Assurance Scheme requirements.

Proof of Purchase of all veterinary medicinal products must be kept. These are general guidance notes only and cannot be taken as an authoritative view of the law – further information can be obtained from Veterinary Medicines Directorate. Woodham Lane, New Haw, Addlestone, Surrey. KT15 3LS. www.vmd.defra.gov.uk