



Veterinary Medicines Directorate

A REMINDER TO BEEKEEPERS - USING VETERINARY MEDICINES SAFELY, EFFECTIVELY AND LEGALLY

The Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) authorises and regulates UK veterinary medicines and enforces the UK Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2013 (VMR).

The VMD would like to remind beekeepers of their responsibilities and duty to comply with the VMR and VMD guidance. A veterinary medicine must be administered in accordance with its marketing authorisation, which in practice means you must follow the instructions in the package leaflet unless directed otherwise by your vet.

Amitraz-based products

We have received a number of specific enquiries about the use of amitraz-based products for the treatment of varroosis in the UK.

There are 2 authorised amitraz-based products in the UK - Apitraz and Apivar. **Neither of these should be used during a honey flow or when honey supers are on the hive.**

Use authorised medicines

You should only use UK-authorized veterinary medicinal products to treat varroosis in honey bees, unless an appropriate authorised medicine is not available and a veterinary surgeon has prescribed a different product under the prescribing cascade.

All authorised products for bees have undergone a rigorous and thorough scientific assessment to assure their quality, efficacy and safety for bees, the user, consumers of bee products and the environment. A list of all UK-authorized products is available on the VMD's [product information database](https://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/ProductInformationDatabase/) (<https://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/ProductInformationDatabase/>).

Use medicines correctly

You must follow the instructions in the product information unless otherwise advised by the vet who has clinical responsibility for your bees.

Misuse of veterinary medicines can harm bees, make varroa mites resistant to the medicine, contaminate the environment and harm public health.

Keep records of when you have administered medicines

You must keep a record of any medicines that have been administered to your bees for a minimum period of 5 years to comply with the legal requirements for food-producing animals.

Dispose of medicines correctly

You must dispose of medicines and any associated waste such as packaging or unused product in the correct way. Always follow the instructions in the product information about disposal. If in doubt, contact your Regional Bee Inspector (in Scotland, the Lead Bee Inspector through bees_mailbox@gov.scot) or the manufacturer.

Residues surveillance and inspections

The National Bee Unit and Scottish Bee Inspectors, on behalf of the VMD, carry out a statutory programme of honey sampling to check for residues of medicines in this foodstuff. They also have a duty to report any non-compliant use of medicines they find during their inspections to the VMD.

For any questions or further guidance please contact:

Veterinary Medicines Directorate – postmaster@vmd.gov.uk

England and Wales – the National Bee Unit at nbuoffice@apha.gov.uk

Scotland – the Scottish Bee Health Team at bees_mailbox@gov.scot