



# Plan Bee Ltd – Beekeeping Policy

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# 1/ Introduction

Plan Bee Ltd have positioned itself as an environmental and sustainable business with a focus on achieving full transparency on the source of honey as well as emphasizing the important role we play in partnership with organisations to make a natural positive impact.

Plan Bee Ltd specialise in the successful implementation of sustainable business plans and the production of ethical honey. The main activity is to increase the amount of bee hives in the UK through businesses, communities and individuals which has a hugely beneficial impact on the biodiversity and local environments.

Plan Bee Ltd produce high-quality cold extracted raw honey, which is an important differentiator from its competitors. The honey is ethical, unpasteurized and minimally-filtered which is sustainable in its production.

Our objectives are:

- Helping regenerate honeybee populations in the UK;
- Educating communities on the importance of honey bees and insect pollinators;
- Providing scientific research on honey bees in the UK with data gathered from our monitored hives;



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## 2/Beekeeping Method

### Type of honey bees and materials

Plan Bee Ltd keep Apis Mellifera honey bees (Buckfast Bee) and use different types of bee hive including Langstroth and Dadant. Most of our bee hives are Polystyrene hives because of the following reasons:

- They have good thick walls that keep the heat in the cold winter months and are cool in the summer months.
- They are lighter than wood to transport –reducing our carbon footprint
- They are easy to clean ,disinfect and have a longer life than wooden hives
- They do not require a waterproof coating of varnish

### Placing bee hives in a new location

Before placing bee hives in a new location, we always make sure that the bees have enough to forage. We also endeavour to contact the local bee keeping association to notify them that we are going to place bee hives in their area.

### Security around the hive

To avoid vandalism, Plan Bee Ltd prefer to place the bee hives in locations with difficult access (i.e. roofs), however we can put fencing around the bee hives if they are easy to reach.

### General Maintenance

Our Chief Beekeeper and Assistant Beekeeper are permanent employees at Plan Bee Ltd.

During the prime honeybee season, they look after the bee hives approximately once a week. During the winter period, the bee hives only need to be checked about once every two months.

The regular control of the bee hives helps in controlling swarms (colonies showing signs of swarming) and recognising notifiable bee pests and diseases.

### How we feed our bees

In the autumn after the honey crop has been taken off it is necessary to give sufficient food to see the honey bees through the winter and into the spring when nectar will be available again.



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For this reason, before the winter we give Ambrosia fondant with Honey B Healthy (feeding stimulant with essential oils). We also give Feedbee in early spring which is a highly efficient pollen substitute diet for honey bees.

## Health & Safety standards

To ensure best practice we have developed a common minimum operating standard and set of behaviours which are practiced at every location we operate. These are based on regulatory requirements and industry best practice. We regularly measure compliance against these standards and implement performance objectives.

## Swarming Control

Companies, communities and individuals can contact our Chief Beekeeper and/or Assistant Beekeeper anytime in case of a swarming colony from one of their rented bee hives. Once we receive notification of the swarm, we take action, remove and relocate the swarm.



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## 3/ Trade of Bees

### Importation

To import or move honey bees into the UK, Plan Bee Ltd follow animal health requirements laid down in national and EU laws. We import honey bees from other countries within the EU, ONLY if they have a European Commission Health Certificate from the competent authority where the bees come from. We require from our supplier(s) to provide a certificate that shows the area of origin of the honey bees has been free of foulbrood or any other contagious or infectious bee disease for at least the previous 30 days. We also give at least one working day notice to the relevant destination Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency (AHVLA) by using the online Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES), or complete and send the form BEE28 to inform the FERA that we will be importing honey bees. An advance notice of our import is also sent to our Local Bee Inspector and NBU.

Plan Bee Ltd do not import honey bees from outside the EU.

Plan Bee Ltd is happy to send in materials associated with the import to the National Bee Unit laboratory for diagnostic checks on request.

Plan Bee Ltd take Queen Honey Bees from the UK and other countries within the EU and do not need to do any post-import controls as we do not import them from outside the EU.

### Exportation

Plan Bee Ltd do not sell or export honey bees.



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## 4/ Bee Health Programme

We are responsible for the health and welfare of our honey bees, and in the first instance, for the management of pests and diseases. This duty of care includes:

- Recognising pests and diseases and through knowing their legal obligations, reporting any suspicion of notifiable pests or disease to the local Bee Inspector or the NBU (National Bee Unit);
- Maintaining good husbandry and health practices to prevent and control the spread of pests and diseases;
- Ensuring that our skills and competence levels are appropriate and up to date (Our Chief Beekeeper attended NBU Training courses on recognition and control of foul brood and other bee pests and diseases);
- Signing up to BeeBase (Plan Bee Ltd signed up to the BeeBase in 2011 when the company was created);
- Complying with legislation on controlling pests and diseases, including standstill notices and import requirements;
- Using and storing medications and treatments appropriately;
- Maintaining records on the movement and location of our colonies within the UK and making records available to our local Bee Inspector on request;
- Seeking specialist advice from our local Bee Inspector.

### Bee Inspections

During the summer, NBU bee inspectors are welcome to visit our apiaries to inspect colonies for signs of disease.

### Varroa Mite

We routinely monitor Varroa mite infestation in our colonies, in early spring, after the spring honey flow, at honey harvest and late autumn. One of the monitoring methods we use is measuring 'mite drop' onto a sampling tray or drawer underneath the floor of the colony. If we notice that a colony is infected and potentially harmed, we contact our local Bee Inspector immediately or the NBU office and treat the Varroa Mite using a combination of chemical and biotechnical controls is the most effective method only authorised by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD). If the treatment is not working, we destroy the infected colony.



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## Foul brood Disease of Honey Bees

Here are the precautions we take if we suspect foul brood in one of our bee hives:

- Close the hive;
- Disinfect beekeeping equipment and gloves before examining other colonies, or use new equipment;
- Contact our local Bee Inspector immediately or the NBU office;
- Leave the colony where it is. Respect a self-imposed 'Standstill' which is a requirement under the legislation;
- Order diagnosis of Foul brood Diseases;

### Treatment of European Foul Brood

If the diagnosis confirms the presence of European Foul Brood, the colony will be treated with the antibiotic oxytetracycline.

### Treatment of the American Foul Brood

If the diagnosis confirms the presence of American Foul Brood, the infected colony and hive will be destroyed.

## Nosema

We believe that Nosema is one of the most harmful disease for honey bees and for this reason we give Honey B Healthy / Hive Alive to our colonies as it prevents against this disease.

If we suspect one of our colonies to be infected, we send samples away to NBU for a microscopic examination and use further treatments. As well as using medicines for treatment, we maintain the infected colony in good health apply good husbandry practices; such as maintaining strong, well fed and disease tolerant colonies, headed by young and prolific queens.

## Pesticide and neonicotinoids

If we suspect one of our colonies to be poisoned by pesticide/neonicotinoids, we send a sample to the NBU.

If the diagnosis confirms the presence of these chemicals, we move the bee hive to another area.



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