



Tell us about suspected beehive or pollinator poisoning incidents

2018/2019

If you keep bees and you suspect that your hive was poisoned by pesticides or other chemicals, please tell us about this. We gather reports about pollinator incidents from around New Zealand and send them to an international forum. Together these reports may help governments across the world make the best decisions for protecting pollinators. Find out more [here](#).

Symptoms of a poisoned beehive

The situation is serious if a large part of a hive dies. But how can you tell if it is from poisoning? Look out for:

- large numbers of dead bees at the hive entrance
- live bees outside the entrance may look sick and move slowly or jerkily
- there may be dead adult bees inside the hive
- most or all of your hives are affected
- the dead bees may have their proboscis fully extended, their hind legs outstretched behind them, and their wings at odd angles to their bodies
- there are less foraging bees leaving the hive
- the remaining bees may behave aggressively.

If there are other symptoms, there may be another cause of death. To find out for sure, you could collect samples of the dead bees, and honey or wax from the affected hives, and have them tested to check for chemical exposure.

Why collect international data

In some countries, bees and other pollinators have declined in recent decades. The growth of large areas of monoculture crops (and resulting loss of habitat), the spread of pests and diseases, and the use and misuse of pesticides are some of the possible reasons.

The OECD (the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) is a place where governments from 36 industrialised countries around the world work together to find solutions for shared problems. In 2014, the OECD set up the Pollinator Incidents Information System for



Photo: Damien Tupinier

collecting and sharing information quickly and consistently between countries about pollinator poisoning incidents that may be potentially linked to pesticides.

New Zealand has been a member of the OECD since 1973, so we introduced this system to monitor the situation here. The EPA is responsible for reporting pollinator incidents back to the OECD. In New Zealand, our economy relies strongly on agriculture and, like other countries, our cropping and pasture relies heavily on healthy populations of bees and other pollinators. Participating in reporting these incidents to the OECD will allow us to compare what's happening in New Zealand with other countries, to work out whether we need to take a different course of action to ensure our pollinators are protected.

For more about OECD work on bees and pollinators, see the [OECD website](#)

Reporting beehive poisoning incidents

To help us report to the OECD

If you are a beekeeper, or someone who watches wild pollinators, please report all possible poisoning incidents to us, the EPA, as soon as possible. To report an incident for the international system, there is a form to download from our website. The form will ask you for details about the incident, how much damage occurred, and for details about how you think the bees or pollinators were poisoned.

Complete our online form:

[Pollinator incident report form](#)

To request an incident investigation

If you would like to report an incident and ask for further investigation, you need to contact the right agency. For incidents relating to pesticide spraying in the workplace, contact WorkSafe New Zealand. For incidents relating to non-workplace spraying, contact your local council.

If you are considering laboratory testing to find out if your hive was exposed to chemicals, make sure you collect fresh samples (bees near death or recently dead) and store them in a freezer while you arrange for testing.



Photo: Annie Spratt

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To report an incident:

Complete our online incident report form



Environmental
Protection Authority
Te Mana Rauhi Taiao