



**Application for exemption to travel restriction into, out of and through Auckland – 21 AUGUST**

**TO:** Ministry of Health  
**FROM:** Apiculture New Zealand  
**DATE:** 21 August 2020

**CONTACT DETAILS:** Karin Kos, Chief executive,  
s 9(2)(a)  
Email: [ceo@apinz.org.nz](mailto:ceo@apinz.org.nz)

Please accept this application for business exemptions to travel restriction into, out of and through Auckland on behalf of the beekeeping businesses, listed below.

Apiculture New Zealand is the national body representing all sectors of the apiculture industry in New Zealand.

We are making this application on behalf of businesses who have made contact with us based on the specific timing of the restrictions, and the negative impact the restrictions it would have on bee health, and the ability to carry out pollination services, which the wider food production industry is critically reliant on.

**Case for exemption**

**1. Bee Health:**

This week represents the beginning of the beekeeping season where commercial beekeepers are working extensively to feed hives and check for disease. If beekeepers are not able to carry out this activity there will almost certainly be widespread loss of beehives (bees will starve).

**Without bees, our primary industries will suffer**

Bees supply an export honey industry worth more than \$425 million, but they are not simply producers of honey. Bee health has far-reaching impacts on the local economy and environment, playing a critical role in supporting tree and crop farming, dairy farming, animal meat production and some forestry. Pollination services alone are worth \$5 billion to the NZ economy.

The importance of bees is further stated by MPI on their role in biosecurity a readiness response

<https://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/protection-and-response/readiness/bee-biosecurity/>

**2. Pollination:**

Beekeeping businesses that carry out pollination services are typically on 24 - 48 hour notice to move beehives onto orchards and crops to start the pollination process. Failure to be able to fulfil

this work will likely mean crops will fail (without access to alternative bee pollination services), and with this the cumulative prospect of less food available for the year ahead.

### **Bee pollination is critical to the function of the horticulture industry**

Gazette notice 2020-go3789 records the exemption of “horticultural workers involved in the production, processing, transport and supply of fresh produce between Pukekohe and the surrounding areas”.

The Pukekohe area and surrounds have a high number of growers involved in food production for the domestic and export markets.

From the beginning of August beekeepers move hives to orchards to pollinate crops. If these hives cannot be moved to orchards to pollinate fruit there will be a significant reduction in pollination with a flow on effect to food production.

There is a limited window for pollination dependant on when crops are flowering, these hives need to be moved quickly and the health of the bee’s monitored by the beekeepers.

### **3. Consequences of beekeepers not being able to cross the border**

The consequences have now been widely publicised in media reports this week.

On Thursday 20 August Newshub published an article headlined [Coronavirus: Millions of bees starve to death as beekeepers held up at COVID-19 checkpoints](#)

On Friday 21 August Apiculture New Zealand chief executive Karin Kos appeared on **Newstalk ZB breakfast programme**, reiterating the negative impact on bee health (see above), the implications if hives are not treated for disease prevention at the beginning of the season, and the potential of loss of food production if crops are not able to pollinated.

### **4. Do beekeepers have to travel – can the work be carried out by someone locally?**

Apiculture New Zealand has stressed in its protocols and to those applying for an exemption (see below), that beekeepers can only travel where their work relates to bee health and providing food crops with pollination services.

Most beekeeping businesses have a single operating base and staff travel to their hive sites in vehicles. In all cases, people working in these businesses will be the only ones who know where their hives are – often in remote, or hard to access locations.

Beehives do not have GPS technology/locators on them, and it is likely only one or two staff members of that business will know exactly where the hives are located. They are often in and around bush, with access by unformed/dirt tracks and roads.

The person inspecting the hives needs to be someone who last saw the hive as they will be able to detect changes in the hive structure, for health/disease.

In addition, it would be extremely difficult finding a qualified beekeeper with necessary vehicles and gear to inspect and move hives on behalf of another beekeeper – even if the locations were identifiable.

#### **5. How beekeepers carry out time/season-critical work**

Beekeepers drive to their beehive locations.

Where applicable they will have pre-arranged the visit with landowners, to make sure there will be no chance of person-to-person contact (see industry protocols below).

They park vehicles next to their apiaries (group of hives) and inspect them for disease, and ensure they are functioning (hive entrances are open). They will also ensure the bees have adequate feed and access to water.

Once completed, beekeepers return to their operational base.

Those beekeepers who have sought exemptions have agreed to abide by the industry protocols and commit to direct travel from their operational bases to their hive sites, and back.

#### **6. Can the work be delayed?**

Non-essential maintenance work will be delayed and will not be undertaken by beekeepers.

The only work that will be carried out is that which is time-critical – that means checking hives for bee health and disease prevention and delivering hives to orchards for pollination.

#### **7. Economic risk**

Failure to place ensure hives are healthy and in the right place at the spring flowering starts will have a damaging economic impact on individual businesses, but the wider economic risk is more of a threat – if horticultural crops are not pollinated at exactly the right time, there is real potential for the loss of those crops for a whole season, and with that a loss of food supply for the coming year. This would have consequences for both the domestic economy and for the wider primary sector's export revenue. As stated above, pollination services are worth \$5 billion to the economy.

#### **8. Measures in place to mitigate Covid-19 risks – transporting infection prevention**

The beekeeping businesses listed below all have experience in working as an essential service under the previous lockdown levels 3 and 4. They are aware of their responsibilities and have collectively offered assurances they will not come into contact with any people on cross-border travel – they will visit hive sites only (remote from the public) and will not stop on the way to or when returning from

work. There will be no contact with landowners based on Covid-19 protocols already well established.

The Protocols they will be observed are those they have previously adhered to – see below:

### **NEW PROTOCOLS FOR COMMERCIAL BEEKEEPERS**

At Alert Level 3 all workplaces should strive for social distancing of at least 1 metre.

It is recommended you travel as part of an existing work bubble. Records are to be kept on who travelled together and to which locations. Only travel where you absolutely need to manage bee health or provide services for pollination. There should be no travelling for maintenance or not essential work.

- All people working together should regularly wash and sanitise hands.
- Establish processes for staff to report illnesses or potential exposure on a daily basis.
- Establish steps you will take in the event of a staff member having either confirmed infection or had contact with someone who has been infected.
- Physical distancing should be practiced at all times when working with beehives (keep a pallet space between each other).
- Communication with landowners should be by phone. Restrict 'on farm' interactions with landowners to a 'wave' and make clear the hygiene protocols you will undertake when accessing farms. This should include, for instance, sanitising hands before opening and closing gates.
- Vehicle steering wheels and door handles should be sanitised daily, or as drivers change.
- Sanitising should also include any shared tools in use such as in the workshop.
- Each vehicle should be equipped with a wash bucket, suitable disinfectant/sanitiser, soap, paper towels and a rubbish bag for disposals.

List of those beekeeping businesses seeking exemptions based on the above criteria follows.

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

Business name	Address	NZ Business number	Contact person	Email address	Phone number
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s 9(2)(a), s 9(2)(b)(ii)



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