



## PROJECT FAQs

### WHAT IS MITE MONITOR – MEASURE AND MANAGE?

- Mite Monitor is a pilot project for the community-based monitoring and recording of Varroa mite infestations. By gathering and sharing anonymised Varroa data, Mite Monitor aims to improve beekeeper's understanding of their Varroa infestation and help improve their management.

### WHO IS THE MITE MONITOR PROJECT TEAM?

- The Mite Monitor project was initiated by Martin Laas of Midlands Apiaries and Rae Butler of BeeSmart Breeding. It is led by Dr Gertje Petersen, genetics and animal breeding consultant at AbacusBio Ltd, who is also the operational lead of the national honeybee genetics project FutureBees NZ.



### WHY INVOLVE FutureBees NZ ?

- Improving the genetic base of the bee population is a great way to permanently increase productivity and profitability for beekeepers. But even the best genetics cannot perform if aspects like nutrition and disease are not addressed. Working under the umbrella of FutureBees was also a strategic decision, because it will allow Mite Monitor to grow into a national initiative independent of individual beekeeping operations.

### WHO OWNS THE DATA?

- Ownership of Varroa infestation data will remain with the beekeepers who provide it. If a beekeeper wishes to withdraw their participation from the project, their data will be removed from the database.

### WHO CAN ACCESS THE DATA? CAN OTHER BEEKEEPERS SEE OR IDENTIFY MY HIVE SITE IF I RECORD MY VARROA LEVELS?

- Since the database will be maintained and all analysis carried out by AbacusBio Ltd, their consultants will be able to access the data. All access from participating beekeepers will be limited to anonymised information, and great care will be taken to make sure that your privacy is protected.

### HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

- For the first year, participation will be free since funding for the Mite Monitor Project has been secured from AGMARDT. Once the benefits to beekeepers are proven, participating beekeepers will be asked to pay a small fee to cover the maintenance of the system as well as the ongoing data analysis.

### IS THIS AN APINZ OR NZ BEEKEEPING INITIATIVE?

- No. Mite Monitor was initiated by beekeepers that saw the value in recording and sharing information on Varroa levels. For the first year, it will be limited to the region of Mid-Canterbury to ensure that participating beekeepers can reap the expected benefits.

### HOW WILL PARTICIPATING IN MITE MONITOR BENEFIT ME?

- By measuring Varroa levels and submitting them to the Mite Monitor system, you will get a better understanding of the success of your mite management as well as mite population dynamics.

### WHY SHOULD I HELP MY NEIGHBOURS?

- By cooperating across an area, beekeepers will be able to understand if their spikes in mite levels are caused by an inherent problem like treatment failure or a reinvasion from neighbouring sites. With this information, not only will you be able to improve your own disease management, but the providers of mite treatments will have concrete information as the basis of investigations into treatment failure. Hopefully, we will also be able to understand if there are sites that are prone to earlier or later spikes in mite population or that are particularly good/bad wintering sites in terms of mite growth.

### BEEKEEPERS ARE OVERCROWDING MY AREA, HOW WILL MITE MONITOR HELP ME?

- By analysing anonymised data from different beekeepers, we will be able to make an unbiased assessment of problem areas. Once we overlay those problem areas with the numbers of hive sites / hives in the area, we will have concrete signs of the negative impact of overcrowding, which can hopefully be used as the basis of regulations limiting stocking rates in the future.

