



**IOWA BEEKEEPING INFORMATION**  
Iowa Dept of Agriculture & Land Stewardship  
Office of the State Apiarist  
Iowa Laboratory Facility  
2230 South Ankeny Blvd.  
Ankeny, IA 50023

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## Treatment for AFB Infected Colonies

Disease control is primarily the responsibility of each beekeeper, who must learn the symptoms of the diseases and inspect the colonies carefully for the presence of American foulbrood. Inspect your colonies several times per year. Bee diseases are spread more often within beekeeping operations than between them, and lack of inspection is a major cause of such spread. Get to know your bees. Familiarity with healthy colonies is essential to the detection of problems when they arise. Also, take advantage of your State Apiary Inspectors. Our program exists to advance beekeeping. In Iowa, apiary inspection is provided with no fee for the service. Contact the State Apiarist for details.

The **ONLY** treatment for AFB infected colonies is **destruction** of all Bees and Comb. Woodenware may be disinfected, but the beekeeper should evaluate the costs / benefits / risks involved with disinfection rather than destruction of woodenware. For smaller amounts of equipment destruction by fire may be the most practical method of disease eradication. For any amount of contaminated equipment, the safest method of AFB eradication is destruction of all infected bees and all infected equipment. Questions concerning the destruction of contaminated equipment should be directed to the State Apiarist.

The best methods of control are Apiary Inspection and treatment for prevention prior to the existence of AFB symptoms. Countless attempts of saving and treating diseased colonies have been tried and found to be ineffective. Methods of “saving” / “salvaging” infected woodenware sometimes require more expense and labor than the value of the diseased colonies. When not done properly, the treatments often spread disease.

Chemical treatment of existing AFB with Terramycin (TM) will **only** control the symptoms of the disease. TM only serves to prevent bacterial growth during the duration of time when TM is present in low concentrations in the food fed by the workers to larvae.

Terramycin treatment does **NOT** destroy the bacterial spores. The spores remain viable in the hive for decades.

The colony may recover from the symptoms of the disease, but the bees will **NOT** be free of the AFB bacteria.

AFB from TM treated colonies may **still** be spread to other hives.

**If you have any questions about disease symptoms or how to treat for diseases please contact the State Apiarist's office.  
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