

Reference Number: DAERA/26-618
Request Details:
Request for information regarding honey
bee imports, inspections, testing, and
surveillance from 2022-2026.



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department of

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Forest Service
Plant Health Inspection Branch

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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303 Airport Road West
Belfast
BT3 9ED

E-mail: planthealth@daera-ni.gov.uk

11 September 2026

Dear [REDACTED],

Freedom of Information Act 2000

With regard to your request for information received by the Department on 14 August 2026 which sought the following information:

Honey Bee Imports, Import Inspections and Biosecurity in Northern Ireland (2022–2026).

I can confirm that the Department can provide some of the information regarding your request. However, the information requested is not immediately available on platforms that collate numbers specifically related to your request. Therefore, the information that the Department can provide as below is following interrogation of various platforms such as TracesNT, Databees and other management information sources.

1. Numbers and types of honey bee imports

Table 1 below provides data on **queen** honey bee importations to Northern Ireland (NI), including inspections and sampling, for the period of 1st January 2022 to date.

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contact the Department via the Next Generation Text
Relay Service by dialling 18001 + telephone number.

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Country of Origin	Italy	Malta	Hungary	Denmark	Germany	Lithuania	Greece
2026							
No. of Consignments	45	19	18	2	1	2	0
No. Queens Imported	13687	14840	3209	286	50	80	0
No. Queens Inspected	13687	9970	1215	286	50	30	0
Total Queens Sampled	12451	0	0	0	0	0	0
2025							
No. of Consignments	36	19	18	0	3	0	0
No. Queens Imported	10126	12710	2571	0	25	0	0
No. Queens Inspected	10126	5408	1124	0	15	0	0
Total Queens Sampled	7430	0	0	0	0	0	0
2024							
No. of Consignments	59	7	17	1	1	0	0
No. Queens Imported	14195	4100	3170	100	100	0	0
No. Queens Inspected	13595	2025	2299	40	25	0	0
Total Queens Sampled	13015	0	0	0	0	0	0
2023							
No. of Consignments	25	19	8	1	0	0	0
No. Queens Imported	3985	7952	1282	250	0	0	0
No. Queens Inspected	3985	2300	1182	250	0	0	0
Total Queens Sampled	3035	0	0	0	0	0	0
2022							
No. of Consignments	44	3	14	0	0	0	4
No. Queens Imported	5425	205	984	0	0	0	110
No. Queens Inspected	5425	0	727	0	0	0	110
Total Queens Sampled	4525	0	190	0	0	0	0

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Additional information:

- DAERA has one recording of three **hives** entering NI from Slovakia in 2023, which have not been included in the table above.
- There have been no recordings of **nucleus colonies** or **packages** entering NI from the EU.
- DAERA has not been notified of any third country imports to NI during this period.

2. Country-by-country origin

See table 1.

3. Import inspections

See table 1.

DAERA applies risk based official controls on movements of honey bees into NI which includes documentary, identity and physical checks. For intra EU movements, these are carried out at place of destination. There have been no notifications of third country imports therefore, no inspections have been carried out at border control posts.

4. Results of inspections

Following inspections, no consignments have been recorded as non-compliant. There have been no detention, destruction or re-export notices issued on honey bee consignments by DAERA during this time.

5. Laboratory testing and diagnostic surveillance

Table 1 records the number of queens sampled by the Agri Food and BioSciences Institute (AFBI). The samples consist of the debris collected from the collective consignment of queens. Samples are analysed by AFBI using morphological and molecular testing for Small hive beetle, *Tropilaelaps* and other exotic pests of the honey bee, as required. There have been no findings of Small hive beetle or *Tropilaelaps* or other exotic pests on imports to NI. Foulbroods are not tested.

6. *Tropilaelaps* surveillance

Surveillance for *Tropilaelaps* has been focused on import inspections only for the period requested. No further targeted inspections have been carried out. A rapid pest risk analysis has been completed for the UK, which includes NI, and is available here:

[https://www.nationalbeeunit.com/assets/PDFs/6 Bees and the Law/contingency planning/Tropilaelaps-PRA.pdf](https://www.nationalbeeunit.com/assets/PDFs/6%20Bees%20and%20the%20Law/contingency_planning/Tropilaelaps-PRA.pdf)

AFBI regularly review this PRA and provide advice to officials.

7. Small hive beetle and other exotic pests

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No further targeted inspections have been carried out for Small hive beetle or other exotic pests.

8. Risk assessment of countries of origin

DAERA implements EU legislation on the movement of honey bees into and within the EU. Annex VII to [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2021/404](#) lays down the list of third countries, territories or zones thereof from which the entry into the Union of consignments of queen honey bees and bumble bees is permitted, following relevant risk assessments.

9. Changes to controls since 2022

No recorded changes to controls in this period.

10. Imports from countries with known or suspected exotic pest concerns

There have been no known movements of honey bees from countries or zones known or suspected to have *Tropilaelaps* or Small hive beetle present in this period.

11. Importers and traceability

During this period, there have been five importers recorded for honey bee importations. DAERA does not distinguish between commercial and non-commercial importers. Further detail cannot be provided due to risk of identifying individuals. Honey bees, moving from an EU member state, are fully traceable and recorded to their point of destination in NI. Records are considered against record keeping policy requirements.

12. Breaches and illegal/unnotified imports

DAERA has no recorded findings of illegal or unauthorised imports, and no enforcement action has been taken during this time.

13. Contingency planning and response

DAERA, in conjunction with AFBI, have developed a contingency plan for exotic pests and diseases of honey bees. This is reviewed annually and simulation exercises carried out periodically with AFBI colleagues. The contingency plan is currently under review and will be shared on the Department's bee health webpages when complete.

14. Current position as of the latest available date

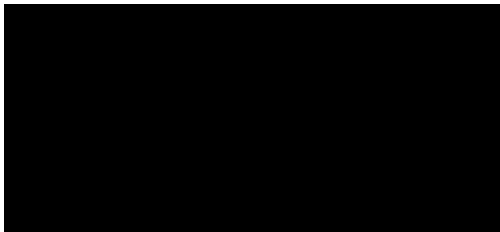
See table 1 for import and inspection/sampling data. Current risk levels posed by *Tropilaelaps* and Small hive beetle is considered to be low due to the controls in place, and no movements from countries or zones where the pest is known to be present are recorded. DAERA has in place internal procedures that recommend all high-risk honey bee imports receive an inspection and at present this includes all imports from Italy due to the presence of Small hive beetle.

If you require any clarification, believe that any part of your request has been overlooked, misunderstood or misinterpreted, please contact me in the first instance to see if it is a matter that can be resolved.

If you are unhappy with the manner in which your request for information has been handled or the decision to release/withhold information, you have the right to request a formal review by the Department. If you wish to do so, please contact The Review Section either by e-mailing daera.informationmanager@daera-ni.gov.uk or by post at The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Data Protection & Information Management Branch, Floor 2, Jubilee House, 111 Ballykelly Road, Ballykelly, Limavady BT49 9HP, within two months from the date of this letter.

If after such an internal review you are still unhappy with the response, you have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, CHESHIRE SK9 5AF, who will undertake an independent review of the Department's decision.

Yours sincerely,



DAERA Plant Health Inspection Branch

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