

### Establishing a Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR) - A Guide for Nova Scotia Beekeepers

A VCPR is a professional relationship between the veterinarian, client, and patient (the animal(s)) and is essential for effective veterinary care. It formally establishes the veterinarian as part of the farm management team and allows them to make decisions that are in the best interest of the animals and the client. A VCPR is **legally required** for a veterinarian to be able to prescribe antimicrobials and for clients to be able to purchase prescription drugs. It outlines responsibilities for both the veterinary team and the client. A VCPR exists when the following conditions are met:

- The veterinarian assumes responsibility for making clinical judgments regarding the health of the animal(s) and the need for medical treatment. The veterinarian provides oversight of treatment, compliance, and outcome.
- The veterinarian has sufficient knowledge of the health status of the animals on which to base their assessment, diagnosis, and treatment. This occurs through recent examinations, medically appropriate farm visits or communication with the client once a valid VCPR has been established
- The client agrees to follow veterinary instructions regarding the medical or other treatment of the animal or group of animals.
- The veterinarian is available, or has arranged coverage, for follow-up evaluation, especially in cases of adverse reactions or treatment failure.

In Nova Scotia a VCPR for bees can be established in – person or virtually. To establish the VCPR with a beekeeper, the veterinarian must, at a minimum:

- confirm the provincial BK Code
- confirm the number of colonies held by the beekeeper
- confirm the production management practices of the beekeeper
- confirm the standard operating procedure /protocol for use in a disease requiring an antimicrobial drug

Requesting additional information is at the discretion of the veterinarian. This Guide has been developed to assist beekeepers in Nova Scotia prepare for their initial discussion with a veterinarian.

---

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Company/Farm Name (if applicable):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location of Production Sites:** \_\_\_\_\_

**BK Code:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PID (if applicable):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Any Previous Disease History? Please list:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Number of Colonies:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of Colonies Treated Due to Clinical Signs:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of Colonies to be Preventatively Treated in Spring:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of Colonies to be Preventatively Treated in Fall:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Colonies to be Treated<sup>2</sup>:** \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Please attach any Colony Health Records, Apiculturist inspection records, or laboratory reports, previous treatment SOP's or drug prescriptions.**

Production management practices (check all that apply):

- Honey producer
- Queen / nuc producer
- Pollination services provider
- Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

In your beekeeping management, do you incorporate<sup>3</sup>:

- Biosecurity for pests and diseases
  - Monitoring for pests and diseases
  - Reporting and disposal of clinical pests and diseases
- 

<sup>1</sup> By law, all beekeepers in Nova Scotia must register their colonies on an annual basis with the Department of Agriculture (DAG). For more information, and to register your colonies, follow this link: [https://novascotia.ca/agri/programs-and-services/industry-protection/documents/NSDA\\_New\\_Beekeeper\\_Registration\\_Request.pdf](https://novascotia.ca/agri/programs-and-services/industry-protection/documents/NSDA_New_Beekeeper_Registration_Request.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> At the discretion of the veterinarian, prescriptions may be obtained for one treatment period (spring **or** fall), or for two treatment periods (spring **and** fall).

<sup>3</sup> A Discussion Guide for your AFB management strategy can be found on Page 3.

### Managing Diseases: A Beekeeper-Veterinarian Discussion Guide

During consultation with your veterinarian, they may ask you to describe the methods you use to prevent disease and pest control) in your colonies and ensure you know what to do should a suspected case be found. This Discussion Guide is intended to help facilitate that conversation, as well as assist in identifying areas where you are proactive, and potentially areas where you can improve.

---

#### Biosecurity for Disease Prevention

Check all that you do in your hive management / beekeeping operation:

- Regularly disinfect hive tool(s) and smoker(s). Describe the method(s) you use:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Inspect tools and equipment when moving between bee yards. Describe the method(s) you use:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- When using gloves, are they disposable, and a new pair is used at each beeyard location.
- Have a comb replacement strategy in place. Describe:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Purchase bees, queens, or used equipment only from sellers with a permit issued by DAG.

#### Monitoring for Disease

I am, and/or individuals conducting colony inspections on my hives are, familiar with the general signs of disease:

- Yes       No       I'm not sure

#### Reporting and Disposal of Clinical AFB or EFB

If you discovered a suspected case of AFB or EFB in your colony(ies), describe the steps you would take:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---