

A contingency plan for the small hive beetle *Aethina tumida*

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Infestation with the small hive beetle, *Aethina tumida*, is a notifiable honey bee disease. In order to detect new small hive beetle infestations at an early stage a high level of alertness of all stakeholders, especially the beekeepers, is essential.

After its first official detection in Italy in 2014, *Aethina tumida* has been detected in the same Italian region Calabria again in the years 2015 and 2016. The implemented sanitation measures for eradication of *Aethina tumida* have failed, but are still being maintained to limit their dispersal to the region of Calabria and to prevent the spread of small hive beetles to other Italian regions or even beyond the borders of Italy.

In order to be best prepared for an introduction of small hive beetles into Germany, a concept was developed, according to which the German competent authorities should carry out the eradication of *Aethina tumida*. The concept is based on immediate installation of sentinel colonies at apiaries that have to be eradicated. These sentinel colonies act as a lure for small hive beetles that might have escaped the eradication process. The competent authorities will be responsible for maintenance and monitoring of these sentinel colonies. Monitoring should be conducted as a combination of a visual screening for clinical signs of an infestation and the installation of effective small hive beetle traps inside the sentinel colonies.

Beekeepers and the competent authorities should already discuss the possible source for sentinel colonies and build up an appropriate stock of small hive beetle traps.