

Honey Bees and the Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD)

The FDA changed rules for food producing animals in January 2017. This rule change was implemented to prevent antibiotic residues in the human food chain and the development of antibiotic resistance in important human antibiotics. Now beekeepers must obtain a veterinary feed directive or prescription from their veterinarian to treat their colonies for European Foulbrood with antibiotics. The veterinarian has to establish a veterinarian-patient-client relationship (VPCR) just like for any other animal needing antibiotics.

In April 2019, the West Virginia Board of Veterinary Medicine approved a plan submitted by the WVDA Apiary Program Manager to allow a VPCR to be established under 3 conditions. The beekeeper must bring the following 3 things to the veterinarian during an office call.

- 1 - The positive Vita European Foulbrood test performed by a WVDA Apiary Inspector.
- 2 - The apiary inspection report with the diagnosis of European Foulbrood on it.
- 3 - A frame of EFB infected brood placed in a large ZipLock bag for the veterinarian to examine.

West Virginia veterinarians were emailed information on European Foulbrood and the Vita EFB Test so they have access to information about honey bees and European Foulbrood.

The veterinarian can confirm the EFB diagnosis during an office call, rather than have to require a farm call to establish a valid VPCR. The beekeeper is responsible for the cost of the office call, which is more cost effective for them than a farm call. The veterinarian can treat EFB in their office and add another species to their scope of practice. Our honey bees can stay healthier. The state of West Virginia has more pollinators!

West Virginia beekeepers are the first in the country to have this type of accessible veterinary care for their honey bees!