



MAQS® FAQs

Subject: The paper wrap on the gel strip.

Q) I remove the outer plastic wrap, should I peel the inner paper wrap off of the gel?

A) The paper wrap stays on. It works as a wick to help control the vapour release.

Subject: Examining the colony and then treating.

Q) The label says to disturb the colony as little as possible at time of application. Can I do a full colony exam and then treat immediately, or should I wait and come back and treat?

A) The bees need to have their affairs in order when treated. When running trials it was found out that the colony assessments were best done 3 days in advance of the application. If the colonies were taken apart, assessed, reassembled and then treated shortly after we saw some absconding. It also increased the risk of queen loss. After an exam it would be best to wait at least until the next day to apply MAQS.

Subject: Treating with honey supers on.

Q) Can I really treat with honey super on? Why does it not flavour the honey?

A) Formic acid naturally occurs in honey at levels ranging up to over 2,000 parts per million (ppm). The formic acid concentration in hive air during MAQS treatment remains well below 100 ppm, so the levels in the honey do not go outside of naturally occurring levels.

Subject: Treating with honey super(s) continued

Q) Do I really need a honey super(s) on while treating or can I treat without one in place?

A) No you do not need to have a honey super always in place during treatment. However it is recommended to place either an empty box or honey super(s) on the hives you treat to give the bees room to move up and expand. It is also recommended when treating for late summer & early autumn, to treat while the last honey super(s) are still in place.

Subject: Screen Bottom Boards

Q) Should I leave the Screen Bottom open or close it off?

A) There was only one trial run so far with screen bottom boards open, by Randy Oliver (www.scientificbeekeeping.com). He published the results in the February 2011 issue of American Bee Journal. There was a 4 to 5 % reduction in efficacy over a solid bottom board, however, both open screen and solid bottom boards saw over 90% drop in mite loads. Ventilation to the brood area is important during treatment, so leaving the screened bottom open will provide this additional ventilation.

Subject: Additional entrances, cracks in the equipment.

Q) Should I close off all entrances except the fully open bottom board entrance?

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A) The fully open bottom entrance should be seen as meeting the minimum ventilation needed. Having additional entrances does not seem to affect the efficacy of the treatment. Adequate ventilation is critical with this product. For 2 brood chamber colonies some beekeepers set back the second story to create a temporary full width entrance, and then slide the boxes back square sometime after the first 3 days. If permanently reduced entrances are used, this set back procedure is absolutely necessary to provide adequate ventilation to the brood area.

Subject: Colony response - bees bearding on the hive.

Q) It looks like most of the bees in the hive are bearding out on hive. Is this normal?

A) It is normal for the bees to beard out for the first day, especially under warmer conditions. See the University of Hawaii photos in their report from 2009, found at: www.nodglobal.com/research.html. Add an empty honey super with frames to the top of the hive during treatment. This will give the bees space to move UP away from the strips instead of OUT on the front of the hive. The extra super will certainly reduce, but may not totally eliminated bearding. There may be an increase in adult bee mortality in the first three days after application. Remember natural loss of bees occurs at about the same rate as egg-laying; with the formic treatment the bees may not be able to clean away the bees as quickly as usual.

Subject: Field bee activity.

Q) Will the bees continue to forage during the treatment?

A) Yes, the bees continue to forage.

Subject: Impact on brood - reducing dose?

Q) What is impact on the brood? Can I reduce the dose?

A) Studies have shown that reducing the dose reduces the effectiveness, and may still cause some brood damage. What we know from trials conducted so far is that MAQS works best by the 2-strip dose. Any brood damage that occurs is quickly made up, the queen is laying throughout the cluster area by Day +7. There are often lots of eggs by Day+4 although they may be as far away from the strips as possible. Any damage is cleaned up by Day +7. The field bees can continue to get pollen through the whole treatment, so there are good protein reserves when all the larva need feeding. The next time that MAQS is used, even if it is months later, the bees somehow know how to cope better.⁹

9) Subject: Feeding during treatment.

Q) Can I feed during treatment?

A) Feeding of any type (frame, hive-top feeder) is not recommended during treatment. Feeding may commence after the 7-day treatment is finished.

Subject: Moving bee hives during treatment.

Q) Can I move the bees during the 7-day treatment period?

A) The bees should not be disturbed during the treatment period.

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Subject: Removing the strip residue after treatment.

Q) The bees chewed up some of the strip but did not remove it all. How do I dispose of the residue?

A) The residue from MAQS will simply compost over time. It can be handled the same way as any other organic yard-waste material. The strips can stay in the hive after day 7 as they are totally biodegradable. The strips can be removed at the beekeeper's convenience, post treatment.

Subject: Corrosive in Nature

Q) On the product label it states: This product is corrosive. Do not allow product to contact metal surfaces. Are the strips safe to use with metal queen excluders?

A) Formic acid vapours are corrosive to ferrous metals, but not aluminum or most stainless steels. Some queen excluders get a white powder on them and will show rust around the edges over time. Plastic excluders are not affected; there are now some good ones available.

Subject: Treating Nuc Boxes

Q) I want to treat my newly split nuc's, but they are only 4 or 5 frames, can I?

A) MAQS beehive strips should only be applied on single or double brood-chamber standard Langstroth equipment or equivalent (e.g. Dadant, British National) full-sized honey beehives, honey bee colony cluster covering a minimum of 6 brood frames (approximately 10,000 bees). If you move your nuc's into full size brood chambers and allow them time to expand to a full six frames then you can treat with MAQS.

Subject: Storage

Q) I have an out building I usually store all of my beekeeping tools, boxes and feed in. Can I keep MAQS in this same building?

A) MAQS has specific storage requirements that will keep it fresh and easy to use for the full year prior to expiry. MAQS must be stored below 25°C and out of direct sunlight. Stored in a dry place in the original container in a well ventilated area, away from sulphuric acid, oxidizing agents, and sources of ignition. Keep the container tightly closed. Once sachet (inner packaging) is opened, use the strips immediately.

Subject: Shelf Life

Q) What is the shelf life for MAQS beehive strips?

A) MAQS has a one-year shelf life when stored correctly as above states. Currently NOD is working on an extended shelf life for future product improvements. Each product pail has an expiry printed on it, that is the date in which it is no longer legal for use.

Subject: Disposal

Q) I have some spent strips and some un-used strips how and where do I correctly dispose of them?

A) Spent strips if removed can be composted. Unused strips: Do not contaminate ponds, waterways and ditches with the strip or used

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packaging. Any unused veterinary medicinal product or waste materials derived from such veterinary medicinal products should be disposed of in accordance with local requirements.

Subject: Special Equipment or PPE

Q) When handling and applying the product, wear the usual beekeeping protective clothing. Always wear chemical/acid resistant gloves, PVC, neoprene or nitrile gloves (EN 374), when handling the product.