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Two Alberta honey producers fined for unregistered pest control

by [Jeff](#) on [MAY 22, 2013](#) in [NEWS](#)

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Two Alberta honey producers have been handed hefty fines for using unregistered pest control products in their beehives.

This week Health Canada's [Pest Management Regulatory Agency](#) announced it had fined [Russell Severson](#) of Camrose, Alberta, \$31,200 for using an unapproved amitraz-based insecticide, and Miedema Honey Farm Inc. of Barrhead, Alberta, \$8,000 for using an unapproved thymol-based treatment.

While both amitraz and thymol can be used in Canada for treating mite infestations in beehives under the labels Apivar and Thymovar, PMRA only allows products that have been federally registered. In recent months PMRA has been on a campaign warning beekeepers that they cannot use treatments that have been bought in the U.S. and which do not have labels showing Canadian registration. They also have banned the use of home-made concoctions that involve active ingredients purchased outside of Canada. In March at the B.C. Honey Producers' Association's semi-annual meeting the PMRA gave a strongly warning that it is watching how beekeepers use acaricides and insecticides. The speaker made it clear that a PMRA inspector can, at will, go into beekeepers' yards and open their hives to determine if you are complying with the regulations. She repeated a number of times that beekeepers cannot bring into Canada treatments from the U.S., even if the basic chemicals in those treatments are already approved for use here. She specifically singled out Api Life Var, a U.S.-approved treatment that uses thymol as a base ingredient.

The U.S. just recently approved the use of Amitraz in stateside colonies.

I am not clear on what the issue was with Severson, other than that in March Health Canada's Pesticide Compliance Program issued six notices of violation to him for using "an unregistered pest control product containing the active ingredient amitraz." Each violation involved a \$5,200 penalty under Canada's Administrative Monetary Penalties Act . Online searches indicate the company is 23 years old, is a large producer of bulk and creamed honey, and is certified by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency as a producer/packer.

In the case of Miedema Honey Farm, Health Canada levied the fine not only for using an unregistered amitraz-based product, but also for the importation of an unregistered pest control product containing thymol. Miedema has been in business since 1983.

In July, 2010 Canada [agreed to register Thymovar](#), which contains thymol. It first

ABOUT . . .

Honey Bee Zen is a blog and site dedicated to the art and mystery of beekeeping. We're based in the Metro Vancouver region of beautiful British Columbia, Canada, a province blessed with a vibrant beekeeping economy. We're interested in the science and breeding of bees, the production of honey and hive products, and the challenges bees and their keepers around the world face.

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registered amitraz in 1995

Paul van Westendorp, the B.C. provincial apiculturist, noted in an email attached to the enforcement letter that both Severson and Miedema Honey have wintered bees in B.C. in the past but not last year.

Here's Health Canada's notice of enforcement:

[Health Canada Enforcement Letter Severson – Miedema May 2013](#)



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