



REPUBLIC OF KENYA


GOVERNMENT OF MAKUENI COUNTY

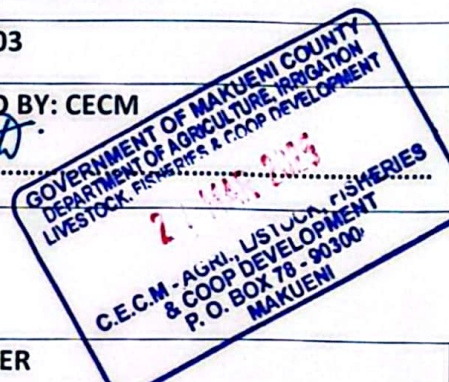


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<b>1.0. DOCUMENTED PROCESS FOR APIARY INSPECTION SERVICES</b>	
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### Introduction

Hive inspection is vital for maintaining healthy, productive colonies and maximizing both honey yield and pollination services while minimizing losses. The inspection, therefore, aims at the following:

- Monitor colony health – detect diseases and pests early.
- Check queen status – confirm presence, egg laying, and brood pattern.
- Prevent swarming – identify and manage swarm cells in time.
- Manage resources – assess food stores and provide supplements if needed.
- Assess colony strength – gauge population and productivity.
- Optimize honey production – add/remove supers at the right time.
- Support pollination – maintain strong, healthy colonies.
- Enhance safety – prevent aggressive or failing colonies.
- Guide decisions – keep records for better hive management.

## **Purpose**

The Standard operational procedure (SOP) for hive inspection targets to guide the Livestock field extension staff while training the apiarists or undertaking the routine apiary/ hive inspection services in Makueni County.

## **Apiary / Hive Inspection Procedure**

### **1. Preparation**

- Wear protective gear (bee suit, veil, gloves).
- Light your smoker and have extra fuel handy.
- Have hive tools, brush, and notebook ready.
- Choose a calm, warm day (bees are less defensive when foraging)

### **2. Approach the Hive**

- Approach from the side or back, not directly in front of the entrance.
- Move calmly and avoid sudden movements.
- Puff a little smoke at the entrance and under the lid (wait ~30 seconds).

### **3. Opening the Hive**

- Remove the outer cover and inner cover slowly.
- Apply smoke as needed to keep bees calm.
- Place covers carefully on the ground, not upside down.

### **4. Frame-by-Frame Inspection**

- Start from one side of the brood box.
- Use the hive tool to loosen frames gently.
- Inspect frames one by one:



- Brood frames: Check for eggs, larvae, capped brood (indicates queen is laying).
- Queen status: Spot queen if possible, or look for eggs as proof of activity.
- Food stores: Check for honey and pollen availability.
- Pests/diseases: Look for Varroa mites, chalkbrood, foulbrood, wax moth damage.
- Hold frames over the hive (so bees fall back inside if they drop).

#### 5. Assess Colony Condition

- Strength: Estimate population (number of frames covered with bees).
- Space: Ensure bees have enough room (add supers if crowded).
- Temperament: Note bee behavior (calm, aggressive, defensive).
- Health: Record any abnormalities or signs of swarming.

#### 6. Closing the Hive

- Return frames in the same order and spacing.
- Gently replace the inner and outer covers.
- Apply a final puff of smoke at the entrance if needed.
- Record findings in your beekeeping log.

#### Tips for Efficient Inspections

- Keep inspections brief (10–15 minutes max).
- Avoid unnecessary disturbance.
- Inspect every 7–10 days during peak season.