THE IMPORTANCE AND MEASURES OF PROTECTION OF HONEY BEES FROM INFESTATION WITH *AETHINA TUMIDA* (WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS ON MONTENEGRO)

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Abstract

Infestation with *Aethina tumida* (ethiniosis) is a disease of bees caused by the small hive beetle, *Aethina tumida,* parasite and predator of bees. This disease is on the International Organization for Epizootic diseases (OIE) list of dangerous infectious diseases, and in the list of dangerous infectious diseases of national regulations in Montenegro.

Ethiniosis leads to great economic damage to the beekeeping of a country and once it occurs it is almost impossible to eradicate. Adult forms and larvae of the small hive beetle feed on bee brood, honey, pollen, bee food as well as ripe fruit. Adult forms of small hive beetles can also feed by taking food from the worker bees while they feed the bee larvae. During the honey feeding, fermentation and spoilage of the remaining honey in the hive result in the smell of rotted orange. In addition, the larvae damage the honeycomb by making tunnels in it, which leads to honey leaking. A small hive of beetles can cause the collapse of bee brood and the escape of adult bees from heavily infested bee colonies. This disease has not been diagnosed in Montenegro so far. However, given the presence of this disease in Italy, there is a high risk of its introduction into Montenegro by importing risky materials - fruits, beekeeping equipment, etc. via international ports and airports.

Therefore, a program for the protection of honey bees from ethiniosis in Montenegro should be adopted in a timely manner. This program should cover measures such as the detection of a hive beetle at an early stage of its occurrence, annual controls on the ethiniosis of apiaries located in risk zones, control of apiaries during relocation or sale etc.

Key words: *Aethina tumida, Ethiniosis, Small hive beetle, Honey bee, Montenegro.*