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Comments Regarding Dysentery in Honey Bees

Dysentery can be caused by a couple things 1) a pathogen, such as nosema (apis in particular, ceranae possibly), or malpighamoeba mellifica (which is a parasite that can impact the function of the honeybees excretory tubules), 2) too many solids or bulk building up in their midgut and rectum .

When the bees cannot take cleansing flights they end up holding the waste matter in their rectum. They can hold about 30 to 40 percent of their body weight in the rectum if needed (it expands like their crop expands to carry nectar). When the bee's rectum is full and they can't get out to defecate and can no longer stand to hold it, they will void in the hive. Even though it may not be disease associated/related, it may cause the hive to fail due to colony stress, diseases promoted by unsanitary conditions and a breakdown in part of their communication system due to overwhelming odor in the hive.