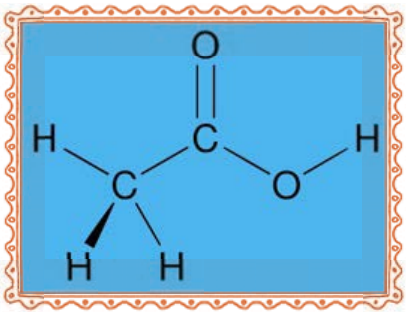
Acetic Acid to fight nosema

USING ACETIC ACID TO DISINFECT AGAINST NOSEMA

As an extra protection against nosema, I would suggest that all brood combs empty of brood that are taken from the bees at any time in the year should be sterilized before they are used again in colonies. Sterilization can be carried out in the following way.

The empty frames of comb are collected into brood chambers, having been cleaned of propolis by scraping the wooden frame. A floor is placed on the ground and a pad of absorbent material into which has been soaked pint of acetic acid is laid on it. The brood chamber of frames is placed on top of this, and the entrance completely closed.

If more than one box of combs is to be sterilized a second pad with its pint of acetic acid is placed on the top bars of the frames of the first box. This is repeated at one pad per brood chamber until all the boxes are treated, the top one being covered with a crown board and roof. Some beekeepers cover the pile with polythene sheeting to keep the fumes in. The combs will be sterilized after at least a week in a moderate temperature.



The acetic acid you require is the 80% Industrial Grade, which is difficult to obtain in small quantities. If you have to buy the more expensive 'Glacial' Grade, you can dilute this by one part water to every four of acid.

Acetic acid is not a nice substance, and will remove the skin from your fingers in a flash. Rubber gloves should therefore be used when handling it. The acid will also attack metal and even concrete. It is therefore best to keep the pile of combs being treated outside, away from buildings, and on earth rather concrete. The pile should be examined to ensure that bees cannot get into it as they will rob any honey it contains despite the fumes.

After a week, the combs should be sterile and should be aired for a while to get rid of most of the fumes left in the boxes. The acetic acid does not in any way affect wax or stores, honey or pollen, and all are perfectly safe to give back to the bees.