



REGIONAL NEWS RELEASE

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HONEY BEE COLONIES DOWN 8 PERCENT FOR OPERATIONS WITH FIVE OR MORE COLONIES

Honey bee colonies for operations with five or more colonies in the United States as of January 1, 2016 totaled 2.59 million. This is 8 percent below the 2.82 million colonies on January 1, 2015. During 2015, honey bee colonies on April 1, July 1, and October 1 were 2.85 million, 3.13 million, and 2.87 million, respectively.

Honey bee colonies lost for operations with five or more colonies during the quarter of January-March 2016, was 429,000 colonies or 17 percent lost. The quarter of January-March 2015 had a loss of 500,000 colonies or 18 percent, the highest honey bee colonies loss of the five quarters. The quarter of April-June 2015, at 353,000 or 12 percent, showed the least amount of lost honey bee colonies.

Honey bee colonies added for operations with five or more colonies during the quarter of January-March 2016 was 378,000 colonies. The quarter of April-June 2015, added 662,000 colonies, the highest number of honey bee colonies added of the five quarters. The quarter of October-December 2015, at 117,000, showed the least amount of honey bee colonies added.

Honey bee colonies renovated for operations with five or more colonies during the quarter of January-March 2016 was 158,000 colonies or 6 percent. This is the lowest number of colonies renovated during the five quarters. The number of colonies renovated during the quarter of January-March 2015 was 271,000 or 10 percent. The highest number of honey bee colonies renovated for any quarter, at 693,000, occurred during April-June 2015. Renovated colonies are those that were requeened or received new honey bees through nuc or package.

Varroa mites were the number one stressor for operations with five or more colonies during each of the quarters surveyed. The quarter of January-March 2016 showed varroa mites at 34.3 percent. The quarter of April-June 2015 showed the highest percentage of varroa mites at 43.4 percent affected.

Colonies lost with Colony Collapse Disorder Symptom for operations with five or more colonies were colonies with loss reported that met all of the following criteria: 1) Little to no build-up of dead bees in the hive or at the hive entrance 2) Rapid loss of adult honey bee population despite the presence of queen, capped brood, and food reserves 3) Absence or delayed robbing of the food reserves 4) Loss not attributable to varroa or nosema loads, peaked at 114,000 colonies lost during January-March 2016. That same quarter a year ago showed 92,300 colonies lost.

HONEY BEE OPERATIONS WITH LESS THAN FIVE COLONIES

Honey bee colonies for operations with less than five colonies in the United States on January 1, 2015 were 50,000. Honey bee colonies on April 1, July 1, and October 1, 2015 were 43,000, 52,000, and 49,000, respectively.

Honey bee colonies lost for operations with less than five colonies during the quarter of January-March 2015, was 15,500 colonies, the highest honey bee colonies loss during 2015. The quarter of April-June 2015, at 5,500, showed the least amount of lost honey bee colonies during the year.

Honey bee colonies added for operations with less than five colonies during the quarter of April-June 2015, was 15,000 colonies, the highest honey bee colonies added during the year. The quarter of October-December 2015, at 860, showed the least amount of added honey bee colonies.

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Honey bee colonies renovated for operations with less than five colonies varied by quarter. The highest number of honey bee colonies renovated for any quarter, at 3,800, occurred during April-June 2015. The quarter of October-December 2015, with 470, was the lowest number of honey bee colonies renovated for any quarter.

Unknown colony health stressors, at 20.8 percent, was the highest for operations with less than five colonies during 2015. Varroa mites was the next ranked stressor at 19.8 percent.

Colonies lost with Colony Collapse Disorder Symptoms for operations with less than five colonies were colonies with loss reported that meet all of the following criteria: 1) Little to no build-up of dead bees in the hive or at the hive entrance 2) Rapid loss of adult honey bee population despite the presence of queen, capped brood, and food reserves 3) Absence or delayed robbing of the food reserves 4) Loss not attributable to varroa or nosema loads, totaled 7,000 colonies during 2015.

For a full copy of the *Honey Bee Colonies* report please visit www.nass.usda.gov. For state specific questions please contact:

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