



Iowa Ag News – Honey Bee Colonies

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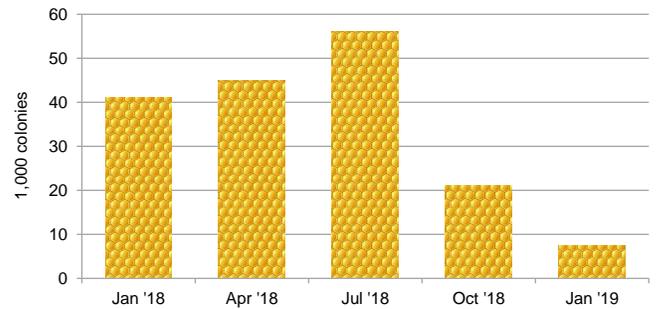
Cooperating with the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship

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Honey bee colonies for operations with 5 or more colonies in Iowa as of January 1, 2019, totaled 7,500 colonies. This is 82 percent below the 41,000 colonies on January 1 last year, and 64 percent below the 21,000 colonies during the October-December 2018 quarter. Producers boosted their January 1 inventory by moving colonies into Iowa and adding colonies to a maximum of 11,500 during the January-March 2019 quarter. Since January 2018 the July-September 2018 quarter had the largest maximum number of colonies, with 57,000, while January-March 2019 quarter had the smallest maximum number of colonies with 11,500.

**Number of Colonies - Iowa
First Day of the Quarter**



Honey bee colonies lost for operations with 5 or more colonies for the January-March 2019 quarter was 1,600 or 14 percent. This was 9 percentage points above the same period last year but 6 percentage points below losses reported during the October-December 2018 quarter. Since January 2018 the largest percentage of the colonies lost, at 20 percent, or 4,200 colonies, occurred in the October-December 2018 quarter. The January-March 2019 quarter had the fewest number of colonies lost, at 1,600 colonies.

Varroa mites were the number one stressor for operations with 5 or more colonies since January 2018. The January-March 2019 quarter showed varroa mites affected 34.8 percent of Iowa's honey bee colonies, which is the second highest level since January 2018. Other Pests and Parasites, Diseases, Pesticides, and Other Causes categories all saw sharp declines in percent stressed in the January-March 2019 quarter from the October-December 2018 quarter.

Honey Bee Colonies – Iowa: 2018-2019

[Operations with 5 or more colonies.]

	First of the quarter number of colonies ¹	Maximum colonies ²	Lost colonies	Percent lost ³	Added colonies	Renovated colonies ⁴	Percent renovated ⁵
	(number)	(number)	(number)	(percent)	(number)	(number)	(percent)
Jan-Mar 2018	41,000	44,000	2,100	5	270	110	(Z)
Apr-Jun 2018	45,000	47,000	4,300	9	15,500	4,800	10
Jul-Sep 2018	56,000	57,000	3,600	6	1,200	990	2
Oct-Dec 2018	21,000	21,000	4,200	20	630	80	(Z)
Jan-Mar 2019	7,500	11,500	1,600	14	170	140	1
Apr-Jun 2019 ⁶	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)

(NA) Not available.

(Z) Less than half of the unit shown.

¹ Number of colonies in the state as of the first day of the quarter.

² Number of colonies in the state on the first day of the quarter plus all colonies moved into state during the quarter.

³ Percent lost is the number of lost colonies divided by the maximum colonies.

⁴ Defined as any surviving colony that was requeened or received new honey bees through nuc or package.

⁵ Percent renovated is the number of renovated colonies divided by the maximum colonies.

⁶ Quarterly data collection suspended as of April 2019.

Colony Health – Iowa: 2018-2019

[Operations with 5 or more colonies, percent of colonies affected by stressor. A colony may be affected by multiple stressors during the quarter.]

	Varroa mites	Other pests and parasites ¹	Diseases ²	Pesticides	Other ³	Unknown
	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)
Jan-Mar 2018	5.3	1.1	0.3	0.6	0.6	1.4
Apr-Jun 2018	12.7	9.3	0.9	7.9	8.4	0.3
Jul-Sep 2018	29.9	9.8	8.5	0.4	1.9	0.4
Oct-Dec 2018	55.1	27.2	8.9	31.6	29.4	5.6
Jan-Mar 2019	34.8	1.7	0.6	0.3	7.7	3.5
Apr-Jun 2019 ⁴	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)

(NA) Not available.

¹ Tracheal mites, nosea, hive beetle, wax moths, etc.

² Includes American and European foulbrood, chalkbrood, stonebrood, paralysis (acute and chronic), kashmir, deformed wing, sabrood, IAPV, Lake Sinai II, etc.

³ Includes weather, starvation, insufficient forage, queen failure, hive damage/destroyed, etc.

⁴ Quarterly data collection suspended as of April 2019.

UNITED STATES HONEY BEE COLONIES

Honey bee colonies for operations with five or more colonies in the United States on January 1, 2019 totaled 2.67 million colonies, up 1 percent from January 1, 2018. During 2018, honey bee colonies on January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1 were 2.64 million, 2.67 million, 2.96 million, and 2.87 million colonies, respectively.

Honey bee colonies lost for operations with five or more colonies from January through March 2019, was 408 thousand colonies, or 15 percent. During the quarter of October through December 2018, colonies lost totaled 445 thousand colonies, or 16 percent, the highest number lost of any quarter in 2018. The quarter in 2018 with the lowest number of colonies lost was April through June, with 355 thousand colonies lost, or 13 percent.

Honey bee colonies added for operations with five or more colonies from January through March 2019 was 248 thousand colonies. During the quarter of April through June 2018, 676 thousand colonies were added, the highest number of honey bee colonies added for any quarter of 2018. The quarter of October through December 2018 added 220 thousand colonies, the least number of honey bee colonies added for any quarter of 2018.

Honey bee colonies renovated for operations with five or more colonies from January through March 2019 was 180 thousand colonies, or 7 percent. The quarter in 2018 with the highest number of colonies renovated was April through June with 740 thousand colonies renovated, or 28 percent. The quarter in 2018 with the lowest number of colonies renovated was October through December 2018, with 155 thousand, or 5 percent. Renovated colonies are those that were requeened or received new honey bees through a nuc or package.

Varroa mites were the number one stressor for operations with five or more colonies during all quarters of 2018. The quarter of April through June 2018 had the highest percentage of colonies reported to be affected by varroa mites at 56.4 percent. The percent of colonies reported to be affected by varroa mites during January through March 2019 were 45.6 percent.

Honey bee colonies lost with Colony Collapse Disorder symptoms on operations with five or more colonies was 59.9 thousand colonies from January through March 2019. This is a 26 percent decrease from the same quarter of 2018.