



NR-17-39

News Release

August 2, 2017

Ohio Honey Bee Colony Inventory

Honey bee colonies for operations with five or more colonies in Ohio as of January 1, 2017 totaled 15,500 according to Cheryl Turner, State Statistician of the USDA, NASS, Ohio Field Office. This is 6 percent below the 16,500 colonies on January 1, 2016. During 2016, honey bee colonies on April 1, July 1, and October 1 were 14,000, 21,000, and 19,500, respectively.

Honey bee colonies lost for operations in Ohio with five or more colonies during the quarter of January-March 2017 was 4,400 colonies, or 25 percent lost. This is the highest number of lost honey bee colonies of the five quarters. The quarter of July-September 2016, at 1,600 or 8 percent, showed the lowest number of lost honey bee colonies.

Honey bee colonies added for Ohio operations with five or more colonies during the quarter of January-March 2017 was 1,300 colonies. The quarter of April-June 2016 saw 6,000 added colonies, the highest number of honey bee colonies added of the previous five quarters. The quarter of October-December 2016, at 20, showed the lowest number of honey bee colonies added.

Honey bee colonies renovated in Ohio for operations with five or more colonies during the quarter of January-March 2017 was 530. There were 50 colonies renovated during the January-March 2016 quarter, the lowest number of colonies renovated during the previous five quarters. The highest number of honey bee colonies renovated for any quarter, at 1,100, occurred during April-June 2016. 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 for four of the past five quarters. The quarter of July-September 2016 showed the highest percentage of honey bee colonies affected by varroa mites at 60.6 percent, while the April-June 2016 quarter showed only 10.6 percent of colonies affected by varroa mites.

Nationally, honey bee colonies for operations with five or more colonies in the United States on January 1, 2017 totaled 2.62 million colonies, down slightly from January 1, 2016. The number of colonies in the United States on April 1, 2017 was 2.89 million colonies. During 2016, honey bee colonies on January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1 were 2.62 million, 2.80 million, 3.18 million, and 3.03 million colonies, respectively.

Nationally, Honey bee colonies lost with Colony Collapse Disorder symptoms on operations with five or more colonies was 84.4 thousand colonies from January through March 2017. This is a 27 percent decrease from the same quarter of 2016. Colonies lost with Colony Collapse Disorder Symptoms were reported to 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

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