



# Wisconsin Ag News – Honey Bee Colonies



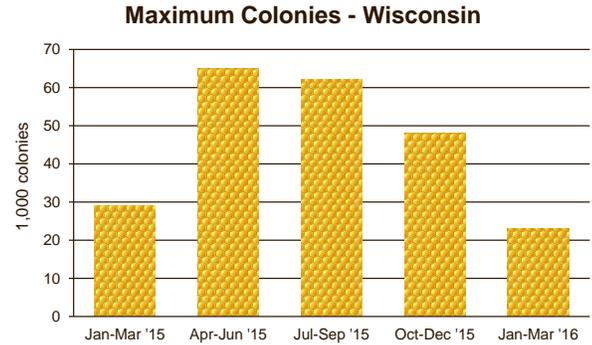
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Honey bee colonies for operations with 5 or more colonies in Wisconsin as of January 1, 2016 totaled 22.0 thousand colonies. This is 33 percent above the 16.5 thousand colonies on January 1, 2015. During 2015, honey bee colonies on April 1, July 1, and October 1 were 25.0 thousand, 60.0 thousand, and 48.0 thousand, respectively. The quarter of April-June 2015 had the largest maximum number of colonies, with 65.0 thousand, while January-March 2016 had the smallest maximum number of colonies with 23.0 thousand.



Honey bee colonies lost for operations with 5 or more colonies during the quarter of January-March 2016 was 2,900, 64 percent fewer than 8,000 lost during the same quarter the year before. The quarter of July-September 2015 had a loss of 9,000 colonies or 15 percent of the maximum colonies, the highest honey bee colony loss of the 5 quarters. The quarter April-June 2015, at 7 percent or 4,600 colonies, showed the smallest percent lost.

Varroa mites were the number one stressor for operations with 5 or more colonies during all 5 quarters surveyed. The quarter of January-March 2016 showed varroa mites affected 22.0 percent of Wisconsin's honey bee colonies. The quarter of October-December 2015 showed the highest percentage affected by varroa mites at 49.4 percent.

## Honey Bee Colonies – Wisconsin: 2015-2016

[Operations with 5 or more colonies.]

|                    | First of the quarter number of colonies <sup>1</sup> | Maximum colonies <sup>2</sup> | Lost colonies | Percent lost <sup>3</sup> | Added colonies | Renovated colonies <sup>4</sup> | Percent renovated <sup>5</sup> |
|--------------------|--|-------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
|                    | (number)   | (number)                      | (number)      | (percent)                 | (number)       | (number)                        | (percent)                      |
| Jan-Mar 2015 ..... | 16,500   | 29,000                        | 8,000         | 28                        | 3,100          | 2,500                           | 9                              |
| Apr-Jun 2015 ..... | 25,000   | 65,000                        | 4,600         | 7                         | 10,000         | 5,500                           | 9                              |
| Jul-Sep 2015 ..... | 60,000   | 62,000                        | 9,000         | 15                        | 1,300          | 4,300                           | 7                              |
| Oct-Dec 2015 ..... | 48,000   | 48,000                        | 6,500         | 14                        | 210            | 10                              | (Z)                            |
| Jan-Mar 2016 ..... | 22,000   | 23,000                        | 2,900         | 13                        | 530            | -                               | -                              |

- Represents zero.

(Z) Less than half of the unit shown.

<sup>1</sup> Number of colonies in the state as of the first day of the quarter.

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

<sup>3</sup> Percent lost is the number of lost colonies divided by the maximum colonies.

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

<sup>5</sup> Percent renovated is the number of renovated colonies divided by the maximum colonies.

## Colony Health – Wisconsin: 2015-2016

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

|                    | Varroa mites | Other pests and parasites <sup>1</sup> | Disease <sup>2</sup> | Pesticide | Other <sup>3</sup> | Unknown   |
|--------------------|--------------|--|----------------------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|
|                    | (percent)    | (percent)                              | (percent)            | (percent) | (percent)          | (percent) |
| Jan-Mar 2015 ..... | 18.8         | 1.6                                    | 2.7                  | 8.5       | 8.3                | 5.8       |
| Apr-Jun 2015 ..... | 35.3         | 5.6                                    | 1.0                  | 8.2       | 15.2               | 2.3       |
| Jul-Sep 2015 ..... | 47.3         | 20.1                                   | 8.3                  | 20.9      | 12.6               | 13.5      |
| Oct-Dec 2015 ..... | 49.4         | 15.6                                   | 2.5                  | 21.9      | 6.6                | 21.4      |
| Jan-Mar 2016 ..... | 22.0         | 1.5                                    | 1.0                  | 12.2      | 8.8                | 9.4       |

(Z) Less than half of the unit shown.

<sup>1</sup> Tracheal mites, nosea, hive beetle, wax moths, etc.

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

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

## UNITED STATES HONEY BEE 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 thousand colonies or 17 percent lost. The quarter of January-March 2015 had a loss of 500 thousand colonies or 18 percent, the highest honey bee colonies loss of the five quarters. The quarter of April-June 2015, at 353 thousand or 12 percent, showed the least amount of lost honey bee colonies.

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 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 thousand colonies lost during January-March 2016. That same quarter a year ago showed 92.3 thousand colonies lost.