



Media Release: Milton, Ontario – July 16, 2019

Despite Overwinter Losses Still Too High, Ontario Beekeepers Doing Better This Year

Over 660 beekeepers responding to an internal survey by the Ontario Beekeepers' Association indicated that 21 percent – or one in five Ontario beekeepers – lost more than 70 percent of their colonies this past winter. That's better than last year when almost one third of beekeepers lost more than 70 percent of their honey bees. However, the majority, 58 percent of Ontario beekeepers responding to the survey, lost more than 20 percent of their hives, the threshold most beekeepers regard as sustainable.

On the positive side, 36 percent of Ontario beekeepers feel their honey bees are doing better or much better than last year (2017-2018), when 25 percent of beekeepers felt their bees were doing much worse than the year before.

Similar to last year, the top reasons given for losses were:

- the “long winter extending into spring,” followed by
- “starvation where the bees used up their honey stores during the winter,” and
- “colonies were too small going into the winter.”

While pesticide exposure mentions were down this year, for the first time there were a few respondents who blamed the invasive pest small hive beetle (*Aethina tumida*) as a reason for overwinter losses. Commenting on the survey, beekeepers noted the milder fall last year that kept bees active and using up stores and this year's long, cold, wet spring as responsible for reported losses.

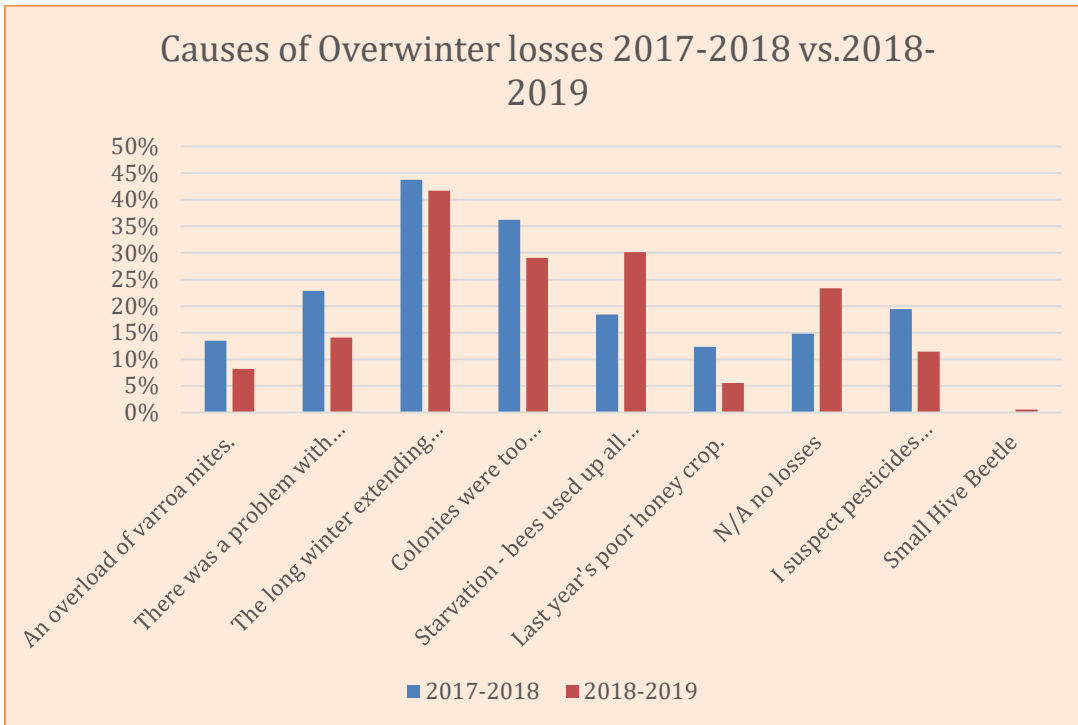
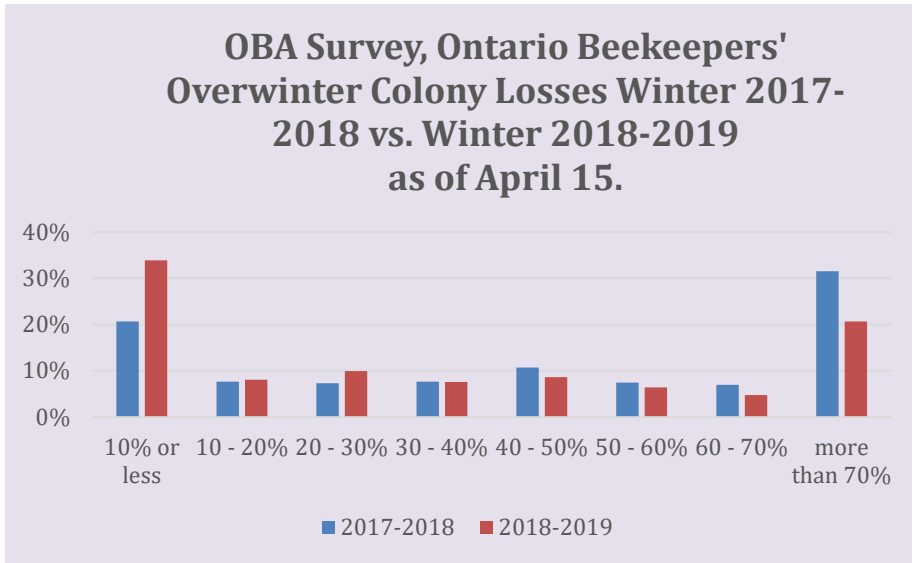
While pesticide mentions were significantly down this year – 11 percent compared to 41 percent last year – corn and soy plantings were cited as the source of exposure.

“I am heartened by the optimism shown by beekeepers this year compared to last year,” says OBA president, André Flys. “Unfortunately, our overwinter losses continue to be higher than we can sustain. We had virtually no warm days this spring so it will be a challenge for beekeepers to get decent honey crops.”

The Ontario Beekeepers' Association has represented Ontario beekeepers since 1881. The OBA is committed to pollinator health and helping Ontario beekeepers get better at their craft through educational meetings, beginner and advanced training, and a vigorous genetic selection program focussed on raising disease-resistant queen bees.

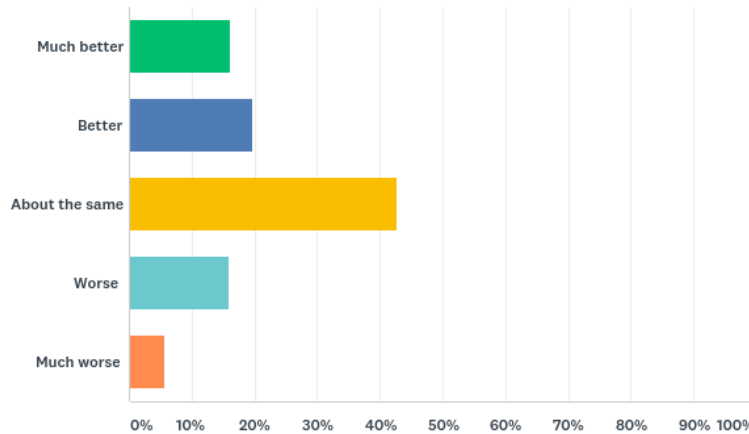
The OBA receives no agricultural industry funding. Its work is supported by its members and a grant for beekeeper education and training from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

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2018-2019

Q8 How are your bees doing this year compared to the same time last year?



Media Release, May 14, 2018: [Ontario Beekeepers Experience Overwhelming Losses](#)

Media Release, July 25, 2018: [Ontario Leads Canada in Overwinter Bee Losses](#)

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