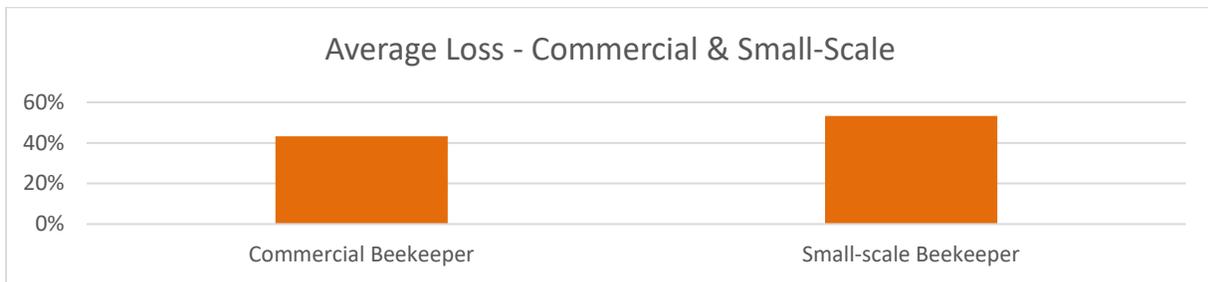


More than 520 beekeepers had responded to the OBA's winter loss survey at the time of this report. The submissions indicate that 53% of the beekeepers have lost more than 50% of their colonies this past winter. However, 72% of Ontario beekeepers responding to the survey lost more than 20% of their hives, the threshold most beekeepers regard as sustainable.

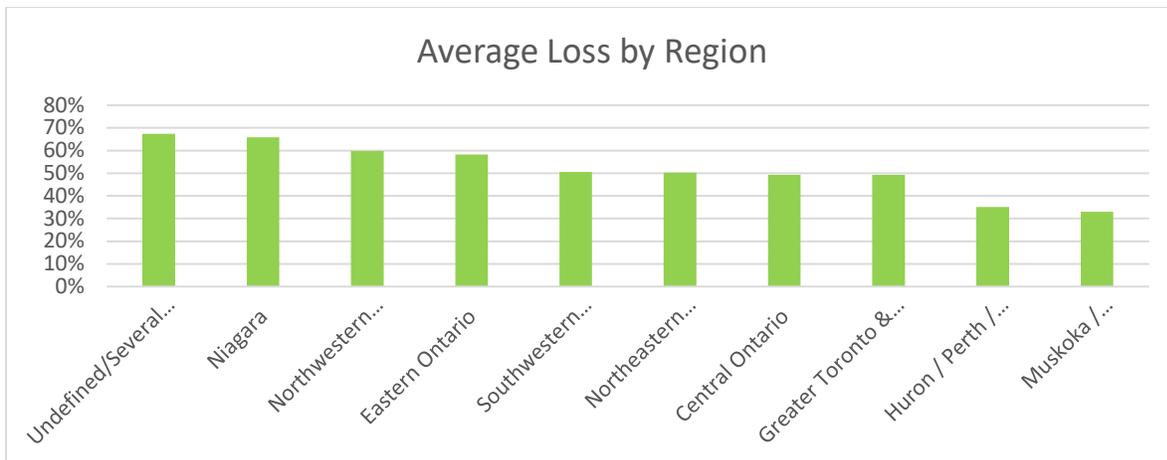
These numbers are staggering and very troublesome. The average loss for beekeepers in Ontario right now, according to the responses, sits at 52%. This is very unsustainable and unfortunately, it's not the first time there has been overwhelming losses in our province.

When comparing the losses for those deemed commercial to those with less than 50 colonies, the numbers are not that different. Commercial beekeepers have lost, on average, 43.2%, while Small-scale beekeepers have lost, on average, 53.2%.

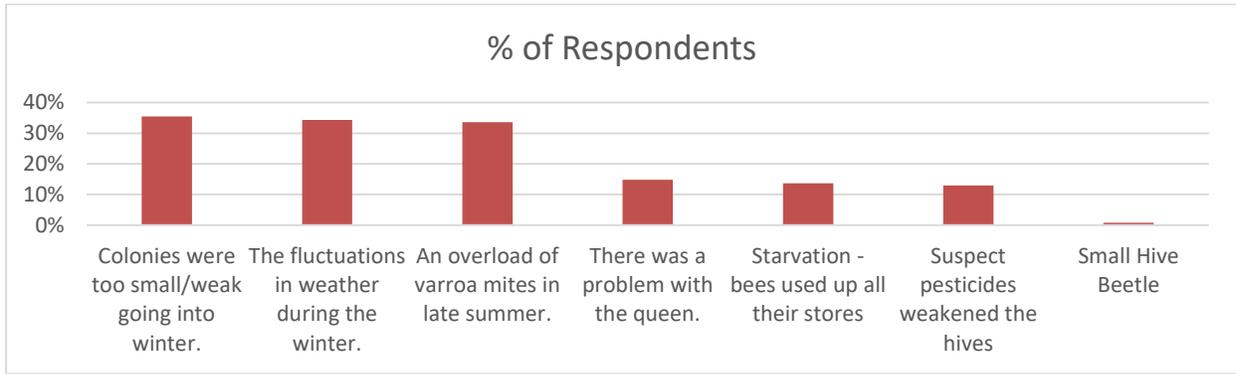


What's troubling to hear is that other provinces are noting the same things. Catastrophic losses that will be hard to recover from. On top of the losses, supply chain issues are still causing delays and limited access to packages and queens from outside Canada. Heavy losses in Canada, and in Ontario will mean that nucs will be in short supply.

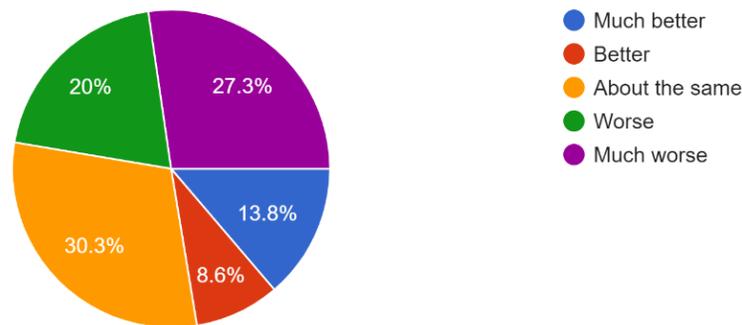
It does seem that some areas of Ontario have been hit harder than others, but the number of responses from those different areas can skew the results a little. For those with bees in many regions, or didn't note their region in their response, the average loss was 67.3%. Those who reported from the Niagara region noted losses of 65.9%. While the Muskoka/Georgian Bay region showed losses at only 32.9% and while this is lower than the Niagara region, it's still a high number in terms of losses.



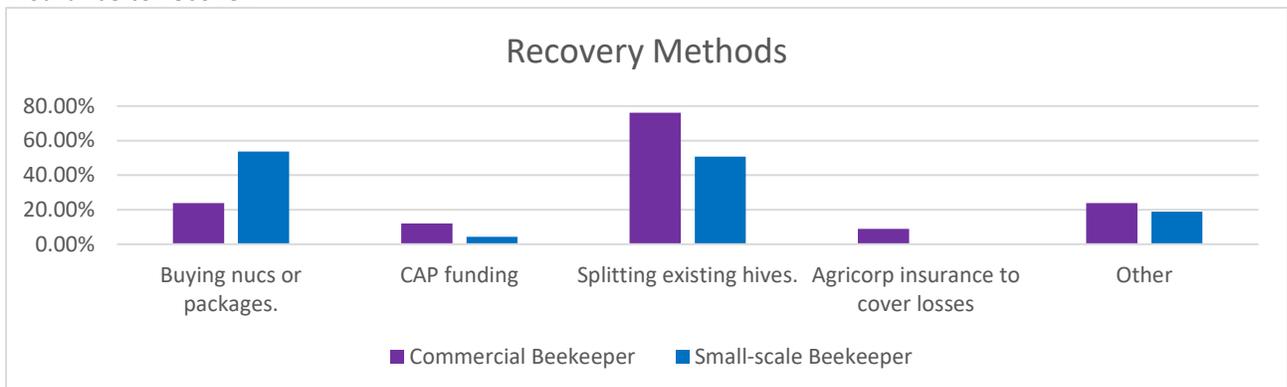
When estimating the reasons behind the losses, beekeepers indicated that colonies were small and weak going into winter, and that fluctuation during the winter months and an overload of Varroa mites were stressful on the bees.



A continuation of the bad news, when asked how the bees were doing compared to the previous year, the results show that 47.3% of respondents feel that their bees are doing worse, or much worse than the previous year, whereas only 22.4% feel their bees are doing better or much better.



When asked how beekeepers would recover from their losses, 76.1% of Commercial beekeepers indicated they would split existing colonies, and similarly, 50.7% of Small-scale beekeepers plan to split. 23.9% of Commercial beekeepers and 53.6% of Small-scale beekeepers are hoping to buy nucs or packages to replace their losses. Less than 12% of respondents indicated they would use funding opportunities like the CAP Managed Bee Health Program or the Agricorp Bee Health Production Insurance to recover.



Commenting on losses experienced this spring, 19.7% of beekeepers noted that if these losses continue, they would be getting out of beekeeping altogether. 25% noted this is one of the worst springs they've experienced for losses, which is very discouraging for anyone trying to provide the best management for their bees, and still suffering losses, not only of bees, but of money as well.



Although these are preliminary results and it's likely that the numbers changed slightly as the spring progressed, the initial responses showing high losses is heartbreaking. The OBA is maintaining discussions with the province for possible resolutions, but a long-term solution is needed to help sustain our unique, important and struggling industry. We can not provide vital services like pollination with these continued losses.

"Each year things get worse, I never had these problems. It used to be I had 10% losses. This is crushing."

"Prior to 10 years ago, my average winter losses were less than 15%. In the last 10 years, they average about 33%"

The OBA thanks everyone who responded to the early spring winterloss survey. When the OMAFRA winterloss survey is sent out, please respond to it as well. The OMAFRA survey is used for official statistical purposes and reported at a national level, and therefore very important to participate in.