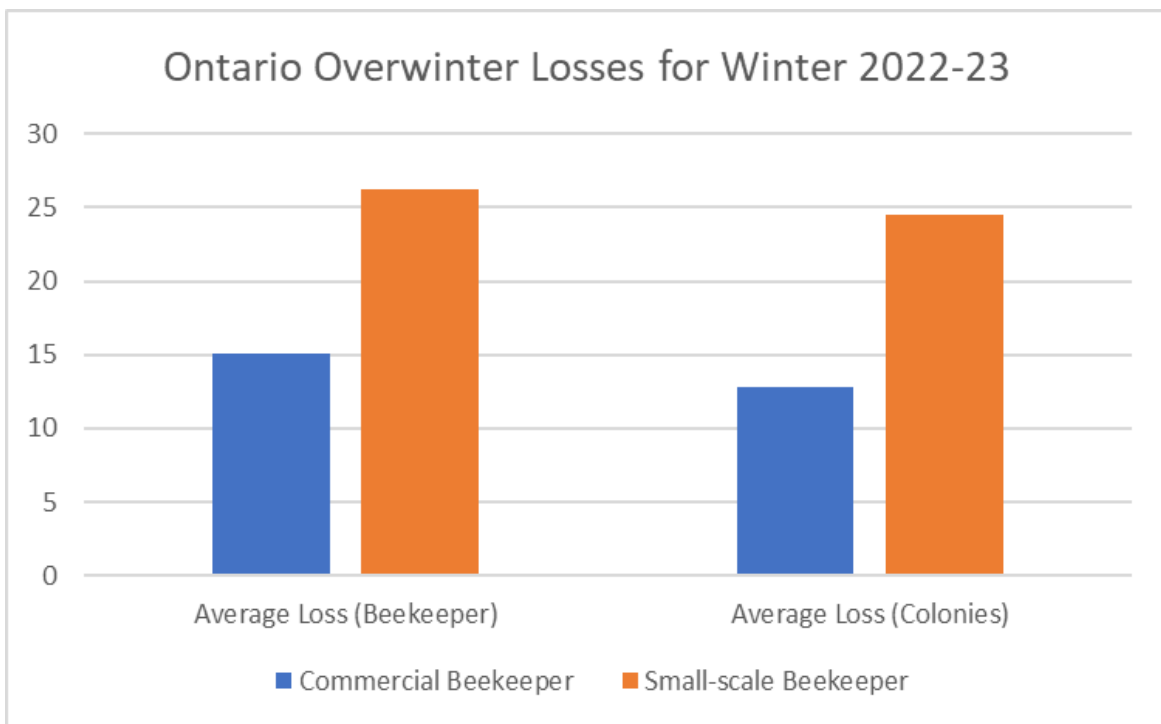


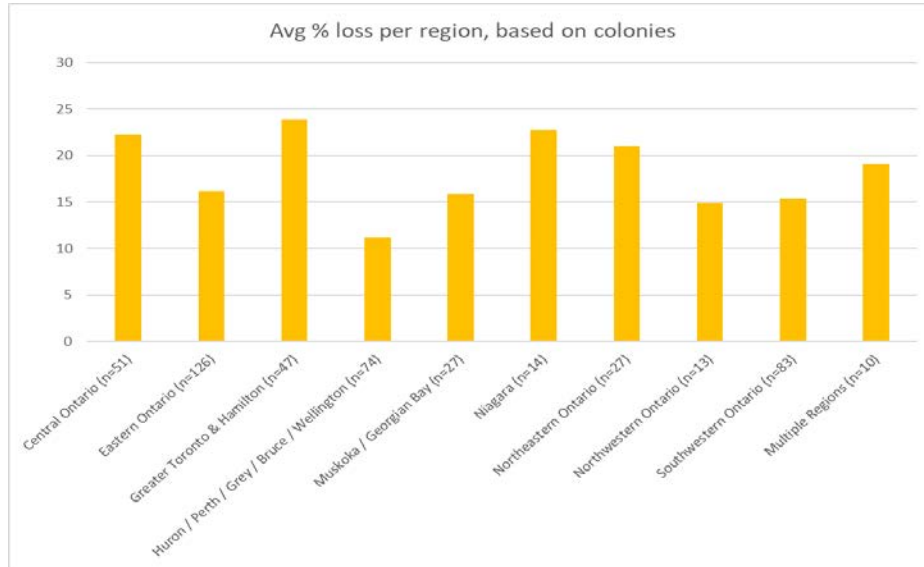
Things are looking up for the 2023 Season.

476 beekeepers responded to the OBA's winter-loss survey for the winter period of 2022-2023. The submissions indicate that 64% of responding beekeepers lost 20% or less of their colonies this past winter. However, losses above 20% were still incurred by 36% of Ontario beekeepers responding to the survey. Losses ranged from 0% (no losses) to 100% (all lost), so there were still some complications over the past winter. However, for many respondents, these numbers are a much-needed reprieve from last year's astounding losses. The total average loss for beekeepers in Ontario, according to the responses, sits at 25.28% in terms of each beekeeper reporting whereas the average loss based on the number of colonies submitted in total sits at 16.25%.

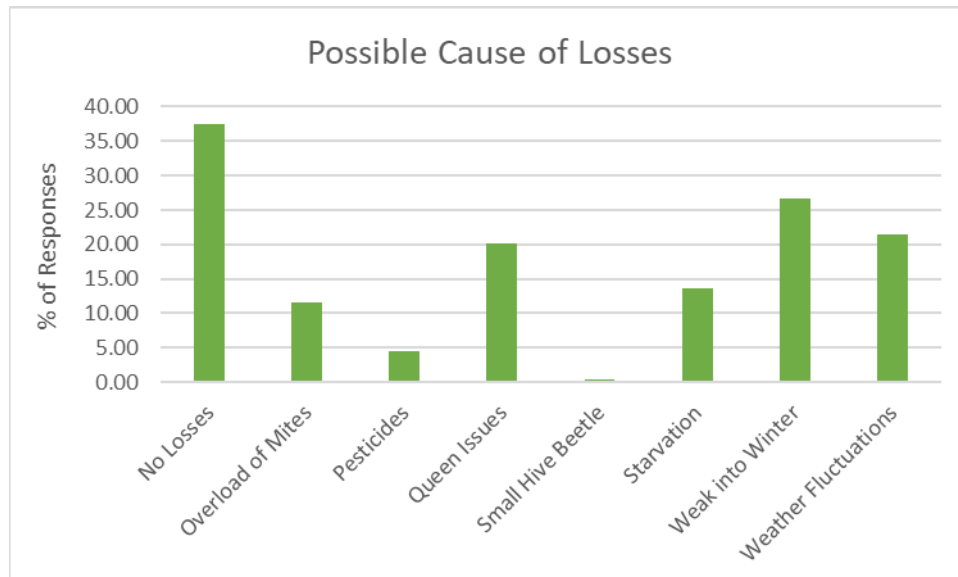
When comparing the losses for those deemed commercial to those with less than 50 colonies, the numbers vary. 43 commercial beekeepers, representing 8507 colonies, lost on average 15.03%, while 433 small-scale beekeepers, representing 3597 colonies, lost on average 26.29%. If calculating averages based on the total number of colonies for commercial beekeepers, the losses indicate 12.78% whereas the total number of colonies under the small-scale group shows 24.46%.



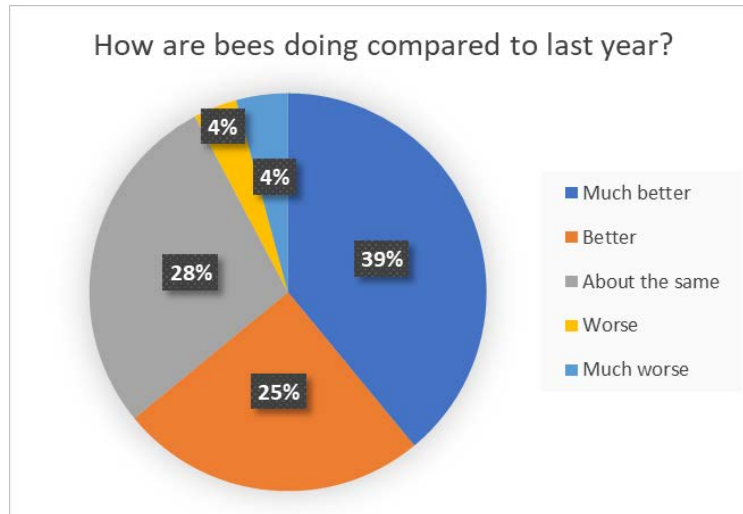
For those with bees in the Greater Toronto & Hamilton region, the average loss of colonies was 23.90%. Those who reported from the Niagara, Central Ontario and Northeastern Ontario regions noted losses of 22.75, 22.22 & 21.04% respectively. While the Huron/Perth/Grey/Bruce/Wellington region showed losses at only 11.17%, based on colony numbers.



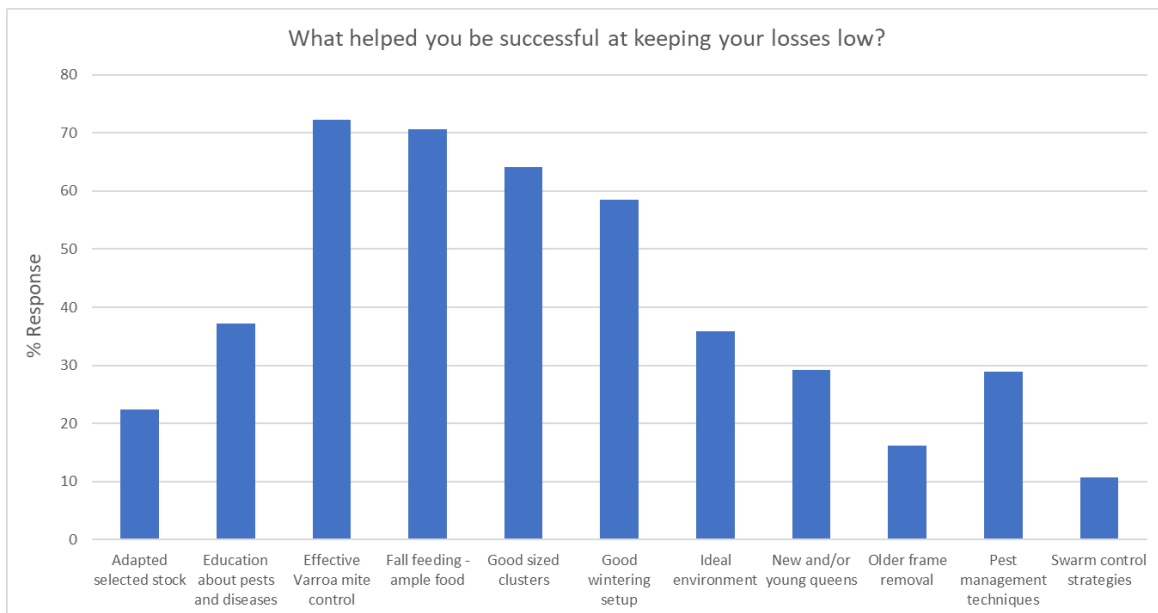
When asked to indicate the possible reasons behind any losses, beekeepers indicated that colonies were weak going into winter, queen issues were encountered and that fluctuation during the winter months were stressful on the bees. Starvation and an overload of mites were also cited, but less so.



In terms of how the bees are doing this year compared to last, 39% of beekeepers responded with “much better” this year, which is great news.



New this year, beekeepers were asked what aspects they felt were helping bees survive better this year, and overall, what good practices they were undertaking. Common answers were: effective mite control, effective fall feeding, good sized clusters, and an ideal wintering setup. Other answers included: education about pests and diseases, an ideal environment, new/young queens and IPM techniques. Some additional responses (not shown) were: a mild winter, early spring feeding, indoor wintering, detailed note-keeping and luck.





Some additional comments left by respondents were appreciated.

“Outreach is very important. Keep it up.”

“Varroa destructor control means everything!”

“I used the drone brood removal system until late summer.”

“Warmer winter than 2021-2022. (The bees) ate more stores so had to supplement with fondant on a double deeps.”

“Beekeeping is a risk management strategy.”

“Understanding the dynamics of bees and Varroa has helped greatly in my treatment program.”

“I wasn't aggressive enough treating going into the fall.”

“Unable to buy sugar last fall. There was a big shortage and many beekeepers in our area had access to a limited amount of sugar.”

“Looking forward to a better year.”

“Success is because of good queens, good nutrition, pest control and overall good health and growing knowledge about beekeeping.”

Although last year's results were devastating, the industry is thankful that 2023 will be a better season for most. The OBA maintained discussions with the province regarding last year's losses, and a recovery program is now in place, but a long-term solution is still needed to help sustain our unique, important, and struggling industry. We can not provide vital services like pollination with continued losses.

The OBA thanks everyone who responds to the spring winterloss survey. The OMAFRA survey is used for official statistical purposes and reported at a national level, and therefore very important to participate in, so please remember to respond to that survey as well.