



ONTARIO BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION Since 1881

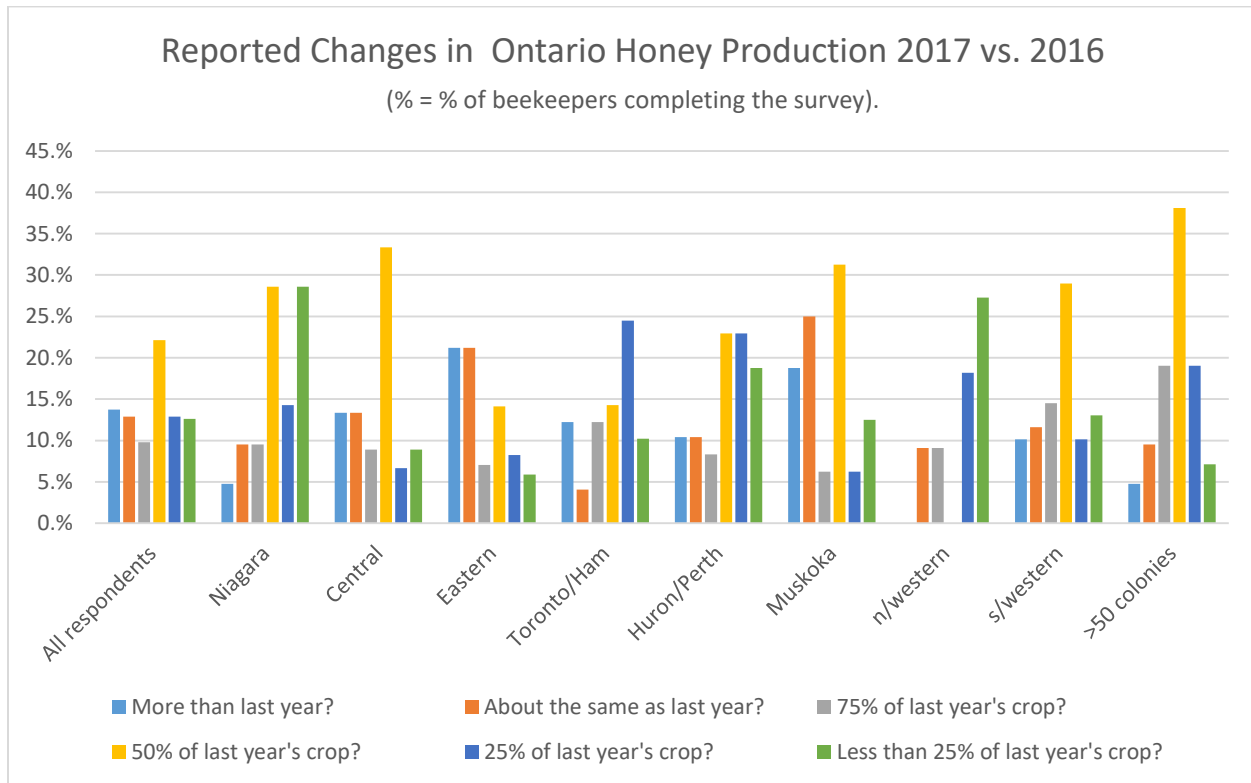
MEDIA RELEASE

October 30, 2017

Ontario Beekeepers Report Dramatically Lower Honey Production in 2017

Don't blame your local beekeeper if there isn't much Ontario honey available for sale this year.

In a survey of Ontario beekeepers sponsored by the Ontario Beekeepers' Association, almost 57% of Ontario beekeepers reported that honey production for 2017 was down by 50% or more from last year. Many beekeepers reported honey production 25% or less than what was collected last year. These trends were found in both small beekeepers with fewer than 50 colonies and in larger operations with as many as 5,000 colonies or more. Ontario's Niagara and Northwest regions appear to be the hardest hit with the highest percentage of beekeepers suffering crops as low as or lower than 25% of the previous year.



Wet weather, unusually high numbers of swarms and poor queen vitality – possibly due to wet weather during mating season, as well as continued exposure to bee killing pesticides – were given as reasons for the meagre crop. One beekeeper summed it up with this verbatim comment:

“This year was a classic example of the poor weather and extreme lack of natural pollen and nectar available – something has to be done soon. Bees starving in June should not happen... if next year is a repeat it could be a disaster to some with high production costs.”

One third of commercial beekeepers who responded to the survey stated that they were very concerned about their businesses. However, only 16% will be applying for agricultural support programs this year. Reasons for not applying to these programs include: too expensive, too difficult to apply and too complicated.

“By any standard, this year represents a widespread crop failure,” says Jim Coneybeare, OBA president. “With such a paltry crop, Ontario beekeepers will be hard-pressed to stay in business.”

Since 1881, the Ontario Beekeepers’ Association has represented the interests of Ontario beekeepers. The OBA provides training and knowledge transfer to Ontario’s 3,300 beekeepers and advocates for pollinator health for honey bees, bumblebees and wild pollinators.

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