

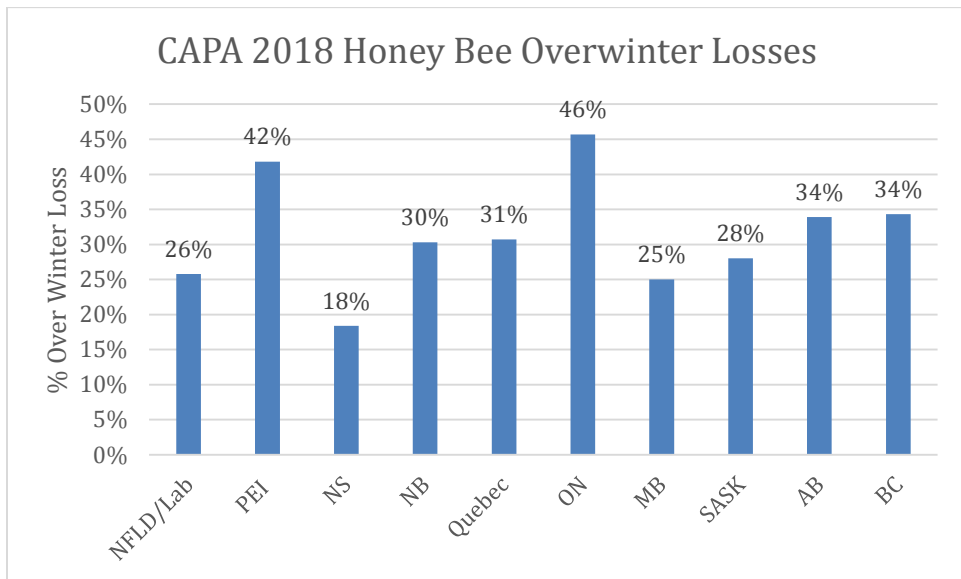


Media Release: Milton, Ontario – July 25, 2018

Ontario Leads Canada in Overwinter Bee Losses

On Saturday, the [Canadian Association of Professional Apiculturists](#) (CAPA) reported that as many as 46 percent of Ontario honey bee colonies did not survive the winter. The CAPA survey is the official record of commercial beekeeper overwinter losses and showed Ontario beekeepers suffering the highest losses among all Canadian provinces.

Ontario losses exceeded the Canadian average of 33 percent by almost 40 percent. Beekeepers surveyed mentioned the unusually long winter and weaker than normal colonies going into winter as well as Varroa mite loads as a causes of high losses. In Ontario, mite overloads are often associated with weakened hives due to pesticide exposure from the overuse of neonicotinoid pesticides on corn and soy crops.



With losses exceeding the 20 percent sustainable limit, Ontario beekeepers will be hard-pressed to stay in business. After a typical winter, beekeepers recover their losses by splitting hives and adding new queens to make new colonies. When losses exceed 20 percent, beekeepers incur extraordinary costs for the purchase of new queens and bees, which are in short supply this year. Beekeepers splitting hives to recover colony numbers report hives have been in recovery mode this spring and summer and will not as a result produce much honey this year.

¹ **Canadian Association of Professional Apiculturists Statement on Honey Bee Wintering Losses in Canada (2018)**

“The situation is alarming,” says OBA president, Jim Coneybeare. “We need several good years to be able to recover from this perfect storm of bad news for beekeepers.”

The abnormally high winter loss numbers represent bad news for Ontario’s producers of fruits and vegetables who depend on insect pollinators. In the province of Ontario, honey bees and bumblebees are responsible for pollinating \$897 million of the \$6.7 billion worth of agricultural crops annually. Furthermore, Ontario beekeepers transport honey bee colonies outside of the province to pollinate about \$71 million worth of blueberry and cranberry crops in eastern Canada.

The Ontario Beekeepers’ Association has asked the Honourable Ernie Hardeman, MPP, Ontario’s new Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, to review support programs to help beekeepers recover hive numbers in light of historically high losses. The OBA will also ask Minister Hardeman to move forward with better enforcement of Class 12 legislation to reduce the overuse of the neonicotinoid pesticides that are devastating honey bee colonies in many parts of Ontario.

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[CAPA Statement on Honey Bee Wintering Losses in Canada \(2018\)](#)

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

[EU Agrees Total Ban on Bee-harming Pesticides](#)

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