2005 Provincial Apiarist Annual Report

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Beekeeping Industry Statistics

No. of Beekeepers	2 600
No. of Producing Colonies	76 000
Average Yield/Colony (lb/kg)	103/46.6
Total Estimated Crop (lb/kg x 1 000)	7 810/3 543
Colonies Winter Last Year	72 000
Average Winter Mortality (%)	18.5%

Diseases and Pests

Disease/Pest	Number of Colonies Inspected	Number of Beekeepers Inspected	Disease Colony Incidence (%)	Disease Beekeeper Incidence (%)
AFB	8 657		1.94%	

EFB	8 657		0.12%	
Chalkbrood	8 657		4.16%	
Sacbrood	8 657		0.35%	
Tracheal Mite			60.0% of colonies	
Varroa Mite			95.0% of colonies	
Other	No Small Hive Beetles, No R-AFB			

Number of Inspections: 837
Number of Selling Permits: 405
Number of Moving Permits: 62
Number of Queen and Nuc Inspections: 361
Number of Queen and Nuc Producers: 88

2005 Sales Results

Queen and Nuc Producers

Total Hives: 422
Total Nucs: 2283
Total Queens: 4811
Total Queen Cells: 1577

Bee Suppliers

Total Nucs: 344
Total Ontario Queens: 33
Total Hawaiian Queens: 266
Total Australian Queens: 130

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Comments

Beekeepers have had an excellent year overall in Ontario in 2005. The estimated average production for 2005 is 103 pounds per colony. This compares to 106 pounds per colony in 2004. The colony count has increased from 72,000 in 2004 to 76,000 in 2005. Many areas would have had an even better crop if they had received rain in August. 2600 beekeepers were registered in 2005.

2004 winter loss was 18.5%. This has become about the normal loss now with the mites present in the bees. Previous to mites being present, the normal loss was considered to be 10%.

Beekeepers finally had a good spring to build up their numbers. They were able to recover the 18.5% loss and add an additional 5.5% increase. When conditions are good for bee development, it is amazing what they can do. It was a bad year for swarming. Those beekeepers with major swarming problems could have divided up their colonies much more in the spring to prevent this problem.

The bulk honey market continues to be returning less than the cost of production. The current price is about $.80 per pound. The cost of production in Ontario is something over $1.25 per pound.

The price of packaged honey continues strong. More beekeepers are again packing and selling their honey. 64% of the Ontario honey crop in 2004 was retailed as compared to 46% in 2003. These are the latest years that this data is available for. Beekeepers indicated renewed interest in selling retail with their 2005 crop.

Pollination has become a large source of income for Ontario beekeepers. 28 loads of bees went to New Brunswick and Quebec for blueberry and cranberry pollination. These loads came back quite variable in stores, brood and bee populations. Most of the beekeepers say they will ship again but some individuals have decided against it. Beekeepers continue to meet the demand for bees for pollination in Ontario. Summer pollination continues to grow.

OMAFRA did a major sampling and checking of honey labels in 2005. Many beekeepers received letters about items to correct on their labels. Phenol was found in several samples. Action was taken on two phenol situations. Sulfa drugs were found in several samples and recall action was taken in three situations. There is the possibility that the bees have picked up the Sulfa in the environment as none of the beekeepers involved say that they have used the product. Beekeepers should only use registered products in their colonies. To reduce the risk of losing your entire honey crop, beekeepers need to keep track of their lots of honey right down to the beeyards. Keep your lots as small as is workable in your system. The smaller the lot, the less risk there is.

Honey Bee Tracheal Mites continue to spread and have shown up at surprising levels where thorough surveys were conducted. Formic Acid must be used at least once per year to keep tracheal mites under control. Mite-AwayII™ has received full registration in 2005.

Varroa mites continue to develop resistance to Apistan®. Those who use Apistan® should check by monitoring to see if it controls the mites. Once the Varroa are resistant to Apistan®, if the beekeeper does not use Apistan® for 4-5 seasons, it appears to work again.

The area of Check-Mite™ resistance does not appear to be increasing from the area between Iroquois and the Quebec border, and south of the 401. The beekeepers that have used Check-Mite™ for longer than two years should consider switching to Formic Acid in the spring, then as soon as the honey is taken off in the fall, followed by Oxalic Acid treatment when the bees are wrapped for winter.

With the PMRA exemption of Oxalic Acid for the fall of 2005, and not wanting to develop resistance to Check-Mite by over use, the recommendation for Varroa control this fall was to treat with the Mite-AwayII™ pads as soon as the honey is taken off and follow up with a treatment of Oxalic Acid using the trickle method just as the bees are wrapped for winter.

Beekeepers are using monitoring to decide if they need to treat a particular beeyard. Although monitoring can save you money and also reduce the exposure of the mites to products that will cause selection for resistance, monitoring can be labour intensive. Having sound data in your hand makes decision making much better. Many beekeepers are investing in screened bottom board systems so they can monitor more easily. Beekeepers are again looking at drone removal as a method of reducing the Varroa population.

Overall, 2005 was a good year. The diseases and mites continue to be a challenge but beekeepers appear to be dealing

successfully with these challenges. The honey market is the current problem area.

2005 Honey Results - Phenols (as of January 27, 2006)

Category	Chloramphenicol	Phenol
Total # of samples analzyed	37000%	36200%
# / % of samples with levels >MDL	0 / 0%	87 / 24.0%
# / % of samples with levels >allowable level*	-	20 / 5.59%
Levels detected (ppm)	-	0.10 - 9.0

*Allowable levels:
Chloramphenical – Zero tolerance
Phenol – 0.1 ppm

2005 Honey Results - Sulfa Drugs (as of January 27, 2006)

	Sulfa-diazine	Sulfa-dimethoxine	Sulfa-doxine	Sulfa-methazine	Sulfa-nilamide	Sulfa-quinoxaline	Sulfa-thiazole
Total number of samples analzyed	330	330	330	330	330	330	330
Number / % of samples with levels greater than MDL	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	3 / 0.9%	0 / 0%	1 / 0.3%	0 / 0%	9 / 2.7%
Number / % of samples with levels greater than allowable level*	NA	NA	2 / 0.6%	NA	0 / 0%	NA	5 / 1.5%

Levels detected (ppm)	NA	NA	0.029 - 0.220	NA	2%	NA	0.015 - 0.310

*Allowable levels:
Sulfa drugs – 0.03 ppm

2005 Honey Results - Tetracyclines (as of January 27, 2006)

	Tetracycline	Oxytetracycline	Chlortetracyline
Total number of samples analzyed	362	362	362
Number / % of samples with levels greater than MDL	6 / 1.7%	2 / 0.6%	1 / 0.3%
Number / % of samples with levels greater than allowable level*	1 / 0.4%	1 / 0.3%	1 / 0.3%
Levels detected (ppm)	0.016 - 0.080	0.016 - 0.170	3%

*Allowable levels:
Tetracycline – 0.075 ppm
Oxytetracycline – 0.3 ppm
Chlortetracycline – 0.1 ppm

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