

Honeybee Husbandry Survey Winter 11/12

Summary

This is the fourth survey of beekeeping husbandry issues in Northern Ireland. A questionnaire survey was sent out hardcopy to beekeeping associations and an online copy made available on the AFBI website. 116 beekeepers responded.

Region	Live before winter	Colonies lost	% loss
Antrim	95	11	12
Armagh	83	10	12
Down	314	80	25
Fermanagh	25	4	16
Londonderry	80	13	16
Tyrone	42	4	10
Total	639	122	19

Typically, beekeepers maintained 3 colonies (range 1-35). Colony loss for the 2012 survey was 19% compared to 16% in 2011 and 13% in 2010. 52% of beekeepers reported no loss of colonies, which compares with 70% in 2011. Of the 122 colonies reported as lost by the respondents, 56 (46%) were attributed to queen problems. A total of 35 colonies from twenty beekeepers (17% of respondents) were reported lost without bees in the hive, although there is no evidence that this is colony collapse disorder as seen in the US.

9% of beekeepers imported queens but this was mainly from ROI or GB. Only one beekeeper imported queens from outside of the British Isles.

37% of beekeepers treated for *Nosema*. 97% of beekeepers treat for *Varroa*. Most used open mesh floors and the pyrethroid treatments Apistan and Bayvarol in September / October. 29% of respondents used thymol-based treatments against *Varroa*. Three beekeepers (3% of respondents) tested for *Varroa* pyrethroid resistance, with one reporting evidence of resistance.

Data are provided to the Europe-wide COLOSS project (anonymity protected).