



Apiculture

Beekeeping Production 2007

The 2007 beekeeping season was a dismal one for virtually all beekeepers of British Columbia. Before the production year was on its way, colonies suffered from a terribly long and cold winter that caused a lot of stress on bees. It not only affected bees but many crops, including blueberries. Many growers reported winter damage, which eventually affected their fruit crop yield. This is important to mention because later in the season beekeepers reported colony losses they couldn't explain other than to claim that it was Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). No verifiable information was collected in B.C. in 2007 to confirm CCD in the province.

The miserable winter rolled into a very late, cool spring that delayed colony spring build-up. Forage sources didn't arrive at the critical times needed to support colony expansion. Then, when summer finally arrived, it was marked by too much moisture and cool weather in most areas, and drought in others. The net result of all this misery is that 2007 is probably the poorest production year on record. According to the annual beekeeping production survey, the average honey yield for the province was only 50 lbs/colony, compared to the long-term average of 70 lbs/colony. For comparison to annual honey production figures, see "Production Statistics 1999-2007 (Summary)".

The results of the annual production survey are based on the anonymous information submitted by B.C. beekeepers. For each region, all entries are pooled and it is assumed that they are representative of the beekeeping community. This allows for estimating total beekeeping production and activities of the regions. In some cases, this conversion has proven difficult, especially when only few returns were received from a region, or when a single producer operates far more colonies than all others in the area. For that reason, the greater the number of returns, the more confidence we will have in the final production estimates. It is important to remember that producer involvement in the survey is the only effective means to measure the status of the beekeeping community in the province.

The attached tables reflect the estimated production levels of B.C.'s beekeeping industry for 2007. Highlights include (according to column):

1. Percentage of survey participation according to the number of registered colonies in each region and a provincial value of 17%. This is a bit better than last year's 14% participation level. This column lists the current number of registered colonies in each of the regions. It should be noted that these figures fluctuate from season to season and from year to year. As previous production years have shown, B.C. beekeepers have been operating between 45,000 and 50,000 colonies for many years despite diseases and economic challenges.
2. Honey production in each region has been expressed in pounds. In 2006, an estimated 3,436K pounds of honey was produced compared to 2,275K in 2007.
3. The average production of honey per colony is listed for each region, as well as the provincial average of 50 lbs/colony. According to long-term records, 2007 is probably the worst production year of British Columbia on record.

4. Wholesale honey sales involve the sale of honey to stores and wholesale packers where there is no contact between producer and consumer. The percentage of the provincial honey crop has been estimated at 24%, compared to 37% in 2006. The shift of honey sales between wholesale and retail is strongly correlated to honey prices. When market honey prices are low, there is a trend towards retail sales where producers can realize higher returns. When honey prices are high, many producers select the convenience of wholesale packers. In 2007, an estimated 24% of the provincial honey harvest was marketed through wholesale packers.
5. The average wholesale honey price was calculated at \$1.33 per pound.
6. Estimated earnings of wholesale honey prices for 2007 differed greatly from the earnings reported in 2006: \$717,316 (2007) versus \$1,786,697 (2006).
7. About $\frac{3}{4}$ of B.C.'s honey crop is marketed through retail sales, including farmers market, roadside stands, direct sales to consumers, restaurants, etc. Traditionally, retail prices have been substantially higher than wholesale prices. It must be mentioned that a small portion of B.C. honey is earmarked for "private consumption" and is not entered into the market. An estimated 3% of the provincial honey harvest is privately consumed, representing a volume of approximately 68 thousand pounds.
8. Beekeepers reported an average price of \$3.22 per pound of non-containerized honey. This is close to three times the wholesale honey price.
9. The estimated market value of retailed honey of the 2007 crop is \$5,491,810. In 2006, the value was estimated at \$6,149,261.
10. Wax and pollen production declined significantly in 2007. While prices rose slightly, the estimated market values were way down.
- 17-24. Stock production and sales including queens, nucs and packages were significantly lower than 2006 production levels.
25. The number of colonies used in contract and non-contract crop pollination has become difficult to estimate, as increasing numbers of Alberta colonies wintered in the province have been contracted for early season pollination. Next year's survey will differentiate between resident and non-resident colonies.
26. On average, colonies used for crop pollination were contracted 1.7 times which is the equivalent of the number of "sets" for each colony.
27. An estimated 38,000 pollination sets were used in 2007. This compares to an estimated 48,000 sets in 2006. Because of the uncertainty of the background of the colonies (being from B.C. or Alberta), it is not possible to make definitive conclusions of any significant upward or downward trends.
- 28-30. According to 2006 and 2007 estimates, approximately 54,000 colonies were prepared for winter in both years. While last year's winter mortality was estimated at 20%, this year's winter mortality was at 32%, far higher than the long term average. This elevated level is comparable to the national average of 29%.



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Provincial Production Statistics, 2007

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Region	%	Cols	Honey Wt	Av. Yd	Whlsle Wt	Whlsle \$	Whlsle T\$	Retail Wt	Retail \$	Retail T\$
Fraser Valley	16	19,472	848,906	44	314,095	\$ 1.30	\$ 408,324	517,833	\$ 4.56	\$ 2,361,318
Vanc. Island	4	8,469	250,251	30	0	\$ -	\$ -	207,709	\$ 3.43	\$ 712,440
Thom.-OK	22	9,698	383,092	40	112,361	\$ 1.65	\$ 185,354	260,848	\$ 2.94	\$ 767,543
Kootenays	32	1,913	65,010	34	0	\$ -	\$ -	62,560	\$ 3.01	\$ 188,305
Cariboo	15	1,098	89,772	82	7,117	\$ 2.25	\$ 16,013	77,790	\$ 3.21	\$ 249,699
North Coast	11	124	6,515	53	0	\$ -	\$ -	6,515	\$ 3.00	\$ 19,545
Bulkley-Nechako	66	482	44,444	92	30,425	\$ 1.00	\$ 30,425	13,067	\$ 2.89	\$ 37,807
Peace	38	4,392	587,493	134	77,250	\$ 1.00	\$ 77,250	509,669	\$ 2.27	\$ 1,155,153
Province	17	45,648	2,275,483	50	541,248	\$ 1.33	\$ 717,366	1,655,991	\$ 3.32	\$ 5,491,810
					24%			73%		



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Provincial Production Statistics, 2007

Region	11 Wax Wt	12 Wax \$/lb	13 Wax T\$	14 Pollen Wt	15 P. \$/lb	16 Pollen T\$	17 Q Raised	18 Q Sold	19 Nucs Raised	20 Nucs Sold	21 Q Pur BC
Fraser Valley	3,936	\$ 4.88	\$ 19,209	0	\$ -	\$ -	1,487	2,474	598	438	1,364
Vanc. Island	2,728	\$ 5.74	\$ 15,657	2,858	\$ 12.82	\$ 36,640	4,131	468	1,689	753	727
Thom.-OK	4,792	\$ 4.54	\$ 21,753	2,886	\$ 10.03	\$ 28,947	9,327	5,680	5,236	2,671	257
Kootenays	560	\$ 5.01	\$ 2,806	0	\$ -	\$ -	1,150	980	175	80	20
Cariboo	685	\$ 4.49	\$ 3,070	0	\$ -	\$ -	122	0	407	34	380
North Coast	0	\$ -	\$ -	0	\$ -	\$ -	188	14	82	19	48
Bulkley-Nechako	380	\$ 3.50	\$ 1,330	2,100	\$ 10.00	\$ 21,000	380	30	152	33	23
Peace	7,659	\$ 2.10	\$ 16,110	17,008	\$ 6.65	\$ 113,103	610	0	425	0	634
Province	20,740	\$ 3.85	\$ 79,935	24,852	\$ 8.04	\$ 199,689	17,395	9,646	8,764	4,028	3,453



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Provincial Production Statistics, 2007

Region	22 Q Pur Imp	23 Nuc Pur BC	24 Imp Nuc	25 # Poll'n	26 Sets	27 T# Poll'n	28 Col. Win.	29 Col. Dead	30 Mort.
Fraser Valley	3,538	1,740	3,575	12,430	1.9	23,617	24,235	6,855	28%
Vanc. Island	1,065	0	0	2,130	1.4	2,982	9,794	2,936	30%
Thom.-OK	4,874	55	0	6,391	1.6	10,226	12,410	4,925	40%
Kootenays	250	38	32	260	1.0	260	2,144	721	34%
Cariboo	380	325	366	0	0.0	0	1,423	827	58%
North Coast	0	0	0	29	1.0	29	291	129	44%
Bulkley-Nechako	99	20	0	0	0.0	0	512	135	26%
Peace	528	5	0	803	1.0	803	3,898	779	20%
Province	10,734	2,183	3,973	22,043	1.7	37,917	54,707	17,307	32%