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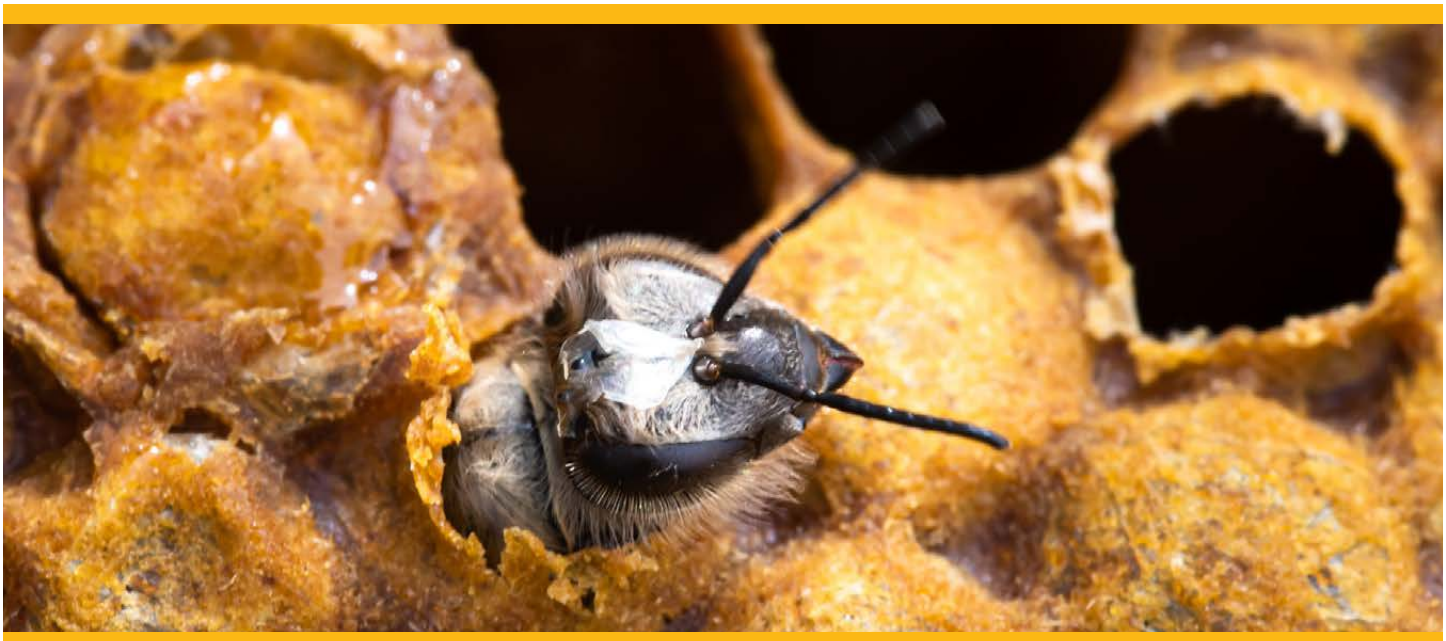

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Canadian Honey Council Report

CHC continues to be very committed to addressing timely issues in our industry again this quarter.

One of the important contributions the Canadian Honey Council provides for the industry is its role as the registrant of oxalic acid. Those involved in the original registration need to be commended for their foresight and the work that they put in for the sole benefit of the industry.

The original registration of oxalic acid was completed in the late 2008-09 and CHC has worked diligently with PMRA to move this initiative forward. This past year PMRA reviewed that registration. In addition, the CHC has been providing PMRA information for a label expansion for the beekeepers to legally use oxalic glycerin pads. The processes for each of these is complicated, quite detailed, and frankly not cheap. Regulatory consultants had to be hired to complete the onerous tasks of providing adequate details and scientific evidence to ensure the rigorous demands of PMRA are satisfactorily met. The cost to insure that beekeepers have the tools necessary to combat varroa is quite steep given our annual budget. It is estimated that the cost to date is somewhere in the range of $60,000 -$75,000. Bear in mind that CHC's total revenue from hive assessments is $127,000, which unfortunately leaves little wiggle room for other very important initiatives. The CHC also receives no monetary compensation for the registration as oxalic dihydrate has become a primary varroa control agent for beekeepers not only in Canada, but in North America.

Last year we tasked our Board to see if the provinces were amiable to an increase in the national hive assessment fee. The answer came back as this is not the time. If the CHC is to continue to operate on a shoestring budget, the national work on labour, interprovincial trade barriers, international sales, adulterated honey, pollination, stock replacement, Tropilaelaps and many other issues will suffer. I urge you to look closely at what you pay to your provincial association, compare that to what percentage goes to the national association and carefully evaluate whether it would be cost effective to allocate more resources to the national level. I am in no way am insinuating our work is more important than anything the provinces do, only our work is different and requires more of your support. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this issue.



Rod Scarlett, Executive Director, CHC

Another initiative that we feel will be beneficial to our industry is our recent affiliation with CFA. The CHC has become a member of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture in an effort to broaden its scope of influence and to take advantage of the expertise that CFA offers. Our membership comes at a time when CFA is reviewing its fee structure and is planning to make some monetary concessions to small organizations like ours. We have added a section on our website https://honeycouncil.ca specifically dedicated to CFA initiatives and welcome any feedback you wish to offer.

We are getting significant uptake of our Online Apiary Training Program and remind employers that it is an excellent way to refresh employees on the intricacies of beekeeping in Canada. Later this year, the CHC hopes to bring forth an idea to develop a promotion and research agency for the apiary sector and will be seeking national opinions on the topic. More details will be forthcoming.

Finally, we are proud to announce that we will once again host a large national meeting in 2026. ***BeeTech 2026*** will be held at the Westin Airport Hotel in Calgary February 12-14, 2026. We will have an expanded trade show and plan to have a wide array of international and national speakers. A special thanks goes out to Dr. Shelley Hoover of the University of Lethbridge for her lead in developing the most educational program possible. Information on the event is on our website https://honeycouncil.ca/beetech2026. We are limited to 400 participants so plan early to attend. Sponsorship and tradeshow opportunities are also available.

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Important Oxalic Acid Information for Beekeepers

Submitted by Rod Scarlett

Recently, the Pest Management Review Agency conducted an inspection of certain facilities that sold Oxalic acid dihydrate for which the Canadian Honey Council is the registrant. Deficiencies were found and the CHC is notified distributors of the deficiencies that were identified. When purchasing the product, we are trying to ensure that everyone is aware of the regulations and will be vigilant in making sure products sold are adhering to those regulations.

Two major infractions were identified. Firstly, according to Regulation PCPA 6(2) no person shall manufacture, import, export or distribute a registered pest control product unless it conforms to the conditions of registration respecting its composition and the person complies with the other conditions of registration.

Oxalic Acid Dihydrate, PCP 29575, is being packaged in a paper bag. Paper is not an approved material under the conditions of registration.

The second infraction was incorrect labelling and inconsistencies. PCPA 6(3) no person shall store, import, export or distribute a pest control product that is not packaged and labelled in accordance with the regulations and, if it is registered, the conditions of registration.

Oxalic Acid Dihydrate, PCP 29575, did not have the approved label; principal and secondary display panel information as described in PCPR 26(1) and 26(2) are missing from the package.

All oxalic dihydrate acid products sold must have the approved label. In addition, all products must have precautions and directions for use either attached or available in an approved format.



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Regional Reports

Atlantic



Rodney Reid

Atlantic Canada Beekeeping Season 2025: A Season of Steady Recovery and Vigilance

As the 2025 beekeeping season progresses across Atlantic Canada, beekeepers are experiencing a cautiously optimistic year. After a difficult winter in 2024, this spring has brought signs of renewal, with milder weather and stronger colony survival across much of the region.

A Milder Start

This year's winter was less severe than the last, allowing many colonies to come through in better shape. Beekeepers across the region reported that hives emerged with decent food reserves and were generally in good condition, enabling an earlier start to spring management.

The early part of the season brought a mix of weather—cool and damp at times—but by late May, conditions improved. Warmer, more stable weather has supported colony build-up and foraging activity, giving beekeepers a much-needed break from the erratic patterns of recent years.

Spring Management and Monitoring

Beekeepers have been focused on supporting colony health through feeding, mite checks, and queen assessments. Many have noted that their bees are building up well, though some variability remains depending on local conditions and how colonies overwintered.

While early-season mite levels have been low in many areas, regular monitoring remains a priority. Beekeepers are staying vigilant, knowing that pest pressure can rise quickly later in the season.

Looking Ahead

With pollination season underway and the main honey flow approaching, there's a sense of cautious hope. Colonies are generally stronger, and the weather has been more cooperative. If these trends continue, the region could be on track for a more productive honey season than in recent years. However, that is in the hands of mother nature and hopefully we receive some more consistent patterns with good flows.

Still, the unpredictability of weather and ongoing pest pressures mean that beekeepers must remain adaptable. The resilience and dedication of Atlantic Canada's beekeeping community continue to be key to navigating these challenges.

Québec



Maggie Lamothe Boudreau, agr., M. Sc.

Quel printemps ! Après un hiver 2025 qui a laissé bien des apiculteurs sur les nerfs, nous retrouvons enfin le terrain… mais non sans défis. Si les pertes hivernales semblent légèrement moindres que l'an dernier pour certains, la variabilité reste grande entre les régions. Les discussions tournent toujours autour du même constat : les années se suivent, mais ne se ressemblent pas, et la résilience reste au cœur de notre métier.

Le printemps 2025 a démarré tôt, mais est resté très froid. À notre grande surprise, la floraison a devancé celle des années précédentes d'au moins une semaine dans plusieurs régions. Cela a forcé un accès précoce aux cultures de bleuets. Comme chaque année, certaines ententes de pollinisation ont été ardues à conclure. Malgré tout, la majorité des apiculteurs ont réussi à louer leurs colonies, avec un tarif moyen se maintenant autour de 225 $ par ruche, voire plus lorsque le transport est inclus.

La saison des canneberges, quant à elle, est sur le point de commencer au moment d'écrire ces lignes. Cette année, nous pourrons transférer directement les ruches du bleuet vers la canneberge, contrairement à l'an dernier. Pour certains apiculteurs, le miel de bleuet a été au rendez-vous. La raison semble être que la densité de ruches était plus faible dans les champs où elles se trouvaient.

Sur le plan sanitaire, les vétérinaires provinciaux tirent à nouveau la sonnette d'alarme concernant le varroa. À ce jour, aucune alerte majeure n'a été émise au sujet du petit coléoptère, ce qui est rassurant pour la suite.

Côté sensibilisation, le Défi Pissenlit continue de faire parler de lui, et c'est avec fierté que nous voyons les efforts de communication porter fruit dans la population. Il est désormais porté par un organisme à but non lucratif. Chaque petit geste compte pour nos pollinisateurs, et il est bon de rappeler à quel point la survie de nos abeilles dépend aussi de leur environnement.

Par ailleurs, au Québec, le printemps 2025 a été marqué par une vaste consultation concernant la réforme du régime de cotisation de l'UPA. Un nouveau modèle est actuellement à l'étude, basé sur des paliers de revenu agricole brut, avec pour objectif déclaré de répartir les contributions de manière plus équitable entre les producteurs. Bien qu'il suscite des discussions, ce projet répond à une demande exprimée depuis plusieurs années, notamment de la part des fermes de plus petite taille ou œuvrant dans des secteurs hors plan conjoint. Les consultations se poursuivront jusqu'à l'automne, et il est essentiel que les apiculteurs et apicultrices fassent entendre leur voix, car les modalités proposées pourraient avoir des impacts notables sur notre secteur, encore trop souvent perçu comme marginal dans les modèles de financement traditionnels. Nous avons d'ailleurs débattu de plusieurs de ces points lors de notre dernière rencontre du conseil d'administration.

L'équipe de votre organisation continue de travailler fort, que ce soit sur les enjeux de santé, de génétique, d'assurance récolte, de soutien aux producteurs ou de représentation politique. Merci à tous les membres qui participent activement aux comités, groupes de travail et consultations.

Je vous souhaite une saison 2025 remplie de nectar, de vigueur… et de satisfaction.

———————

What a spring! After a winter that left many beekeepers on edge, we're finally back in the field… though not without challenges. While winter losses appear slightly lower than last year for some, variability remains high across regions. The same conclusion keeps surfacing: no two years are alike, and resilience remains at the core of our profession.

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Dalan ANIMAL HEALTH

Spring 2025 started early but remained very cold. To our surprise, blooming occurred at least a week earlier than in previous years in several regions. This forced an early deployment of hives to blueberry crops. As in past years, some pollination agreements were difficult to secure. Nonetheless, the majority of beekeepers successfully rented out their colonies, with an average rate of about $225 per hive, or more when transportation is included.

As I write this report, the cranberry season is just about to begin. This year, we'll be able to transfer hives directly from blueberry to cranberry crops, unlike last year. For some beekeepers, the blueberry honey crop was indeed present. The likely reason is that hive density was lower in the fields where they were placed.

On the health front, provincial veterinarians have once again sounded the alarm about varroa. As of now, no major alerts have been issued regarding small hive beetle, which is reassuring going into summer.

In terms of awareness, the Dandelion Challenge continues to gain traction, and we're proud to see that public outreach is bearing fruit. The initiative is now carried forward by a nonprofit organization. Every small gesture counts for our pollinators, and it's worth remembering that the survival of our bees is deeply tied to the health of their environment.

Meanwhile in Quebec, spring 2025 has been marked by a wide-reaching consultation on reforming the UPA's funding model. A new system is currently under review, based on gross farm income tiers, with the stated goal of redistributing contributions more fairly among producers. Although it has generated debate, this initiative responds to a long-standing demand, particularly from smaller farms and those working in sectors without joint marketing plans. Consultations will continue into the fall, and it is essential that beekeepers make their voices heard, as the proposed changes could significantly impact our sector—one still too often seen as marginal in traditional funding models. Several key points were debated during our last board of directors' meeting.

Our organization's team continues to work hard—on health and biosecurity, genetics, crop insurance, producer support, and policy representation. Thank you to all members who actively participate in committees, working groups, and consultations.

I wish you a 2025 season full of nectar, vitality… and satisfaction.

Ontario



Albert Devries

The winter seemed to give way to spring in a relatively normal way at first but then cold weather and rain kept returning. The cool wet weather really did hold back development of our colonies and the planting of crops by several weeks. As I write this, we have had a stretch of nice beekeeping conditions. Weather is currently unsettled with thunderstorms and rain showers popping up. We are facing our first heat wave of the season, which is somewhat double edged. The heat will make it harder to work, but the bees often wind up on a fairly significant nectar flow. Time will tell.

The Ontario Beekeepers Association has completed its annual winter loss survey. It is a fairly in depth and significant survey. The short answer is we had a 33% winter loss according to those who responded to the survey. There's a lot of information in the numbers and how they are presented. I would encourage anyone who is interested to visit the OBA website and look under the news heading. Find the winter loss survey, just boiling it down to one number doesn't do it justice.

I'm encouraged to hear that interviews are being conducted for a tech transfer lead. It is a very important position and I'm happy to report we have some good candidates.

The OBA's fall AGM is being planned for November 28 and 29th in Guelph Ontario. I expect the highlight of the weekend to be the tour of the newly opened Honeybee Research Centre at the University of Guelph. There has been a lot of work and planning going into this center. I'm really looking forward to seeing it and expect many other people are too.

I hope everyone has a good summer and somehow manages to find a balance between beekeeping and the rest of life.

Manitoba

No report at this time.

Saskatchewan



Jake Berg

The bees had a long winter in Saskatchewan and now the spring has quickly come and gone. The bee colonies are growing now in mid June but the spring dwindling was longer than other years.

The preliminary winter loss numbers in Saskatchewan were less than exceptional. Overall winter loss is 44%, with outdoor at 41% and indoor at 58%, of the colonies that reported. The winter loss numbers fluctuate quite dramatically throughout the province with some areas seeing significant loss. Factors that attributed to these losses include mites, virus load, over treatment of mites, drought conditions last fall, and lack of winter bees.

I hope your bees are strong, healthy and ready for honey flow in your area. Happy harvest everyone!

Alberta



Real Dubeau

First of all, my thoughts and prayers go to those affected by wild fires across Canada. There have been quite a number of fires with thousands of people displaced. May we get rain and to help the first responders in the battle with the fires and hopefully return home safely.

This spring like every other spring had its challenges. In Alberta, we saw a big range of winter losses in our hives. I've heard some as high as 85% loss and as low as 18%. Personally, we came out of winter at 20%. Hives looked good at end of March for most apiaries. Unfortunately, mother nature put a few speed bumps in the way to slow us down. April was cool and dry. I've heard from many beekeepers that the April dwindle was significant with most apiaries suffering 20% more loss. Then May rolls around and days got a little warmer. Most beekeepers had a decent hive build but it took a long time to get there. Now bees are humming with a small flow on and most outfits are suppering and getting ready for the honey season. With some timely rains, hopefully everyone gets an average crop.

On the CHC front, it was difficult to get any response from the government on our multiple issues. With the election happening and new Ministers being put in place, progress was limited. We have recently got some news that the projects are resuming and hope to get more government response in the next quarter. It's always a pleasure to work with my fellow board members and our teams is working diligently on these projects.

British Columbia



Jeff Lee

We're heading into the summer honey harvest season, and it's a busy time for beekeepers in British Columbia. It's an equally busy time for the BC Honey Producers Association, which is juggling a lot of different – and new. Here's what's happening.

A Change-up In Spring Programming

Coming off our successful Spring Semi-Annual meeting in Cranbrook, the association

▶ pag. 11

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is looking to change how it delivers spring programming. We've normally held a business day and education program in March. But as I indicated in the last update we're finding that hosting two in-person conferences annually is stretching membership support.

Our tentative plans are being made possible with a fortuitous donation from a private company, Hive Digital Technologies, which wanted to mark World Bee Day. They provided a no-strings and unlooked-for donation of $10,000, asking only that it be used for active bee projects and education.

We're looking to use it as a starter fund for a series of regional spring information and training sessions, beginning in 2026. Essentially an on-the-ground road show, the concept is to offer weekend training sessions for beekeepers in six geographic regions of BC. The concept is to rotate the program over a course of six years, so that every region gets access to our experts. We're looking at using our Tech Transfer Program as the delivery vehicle.

New BC Tech Transfer Program project into American Foulbrood

Speaking of our TTP, our lead, Fahim Raza, is undertaking a new research project into determining the prevalence of American Foulbrood spores in honey. This project, **Community surveillance of AFB disease through the detection of *Paenibacillus larvae* spores in honey**, is funded in large part by Pollinator Partnership Canada and conducted in partnership with Kwantlen Polytechnic University in Surrey. The TTP program is also continuing to work on a group of online learning courses that are supported by Project Apis m.

The scourge of American Foulbrood (AFB) is broadly understood. But according to the proposal, *"In Canada, the data on AFB disease surveillance, province-specific threshold levels for predicting the risk of AFB outbreaks, and the prevalent genotypes of P. larvae are not well understood."*

Raza is working with two KPU professors, Mathias Schuetz and Paul Adams, and Nuria Morfin, the chair of the BCTTP committee, who is now an assistant professor at the University of Manitoba. They aim to collect a total of 125 pooled, extracted honey samples from five BC regions; the Lower Mainland, Vancouver Island, Kootenay, Okanagan, and Peace Region. Five apiaries in each region will contribute. They're hoping to establish threshold levels of P. larvae spore loads to help assess the risk of AFB outbreaks at the apiary level. The results will be published in 2026.

Raza is also continuing work on three other BCHPA/BCTTP projects. One is looking at best practices for overwintering queens in small nucleus clusters. It is being done in collaboration with Leonard Foster's bee lab at the University of B.C., and Emily Huxter, who is providing the queens. Over the summer they are putting together a total of 400 two, three and five-frame nucs, as well as four-way mating nucs. The nucs will then be overwintered in both outdoor and indoor conditions.

Work on two other studies continues; one on evaluating amitraz resistance in B.C. hives continues, and one on implementing marker-assisted selection tools in B.C. breeding populations.

As if that wasn't enough, Raza is conducting workshops in the Okanagan and on Vancouver Island this summer bringing to beekeepers the outcomes of the tech-transfer program.

World Bee Day and Day Of The Honey Bee

In years past the BCHPA celebrated Day of the Honey Bee on May 29 and the BC government often marked this with a proclamation. The date was created by Saskatchewan beekeeper Clinton Ekdahl in 2009 to celebrate the profile of honey bees. In Canada it became known as "Day of the Honey Bee". However this date was at odds with World Bee Day, which the United Nations proclaimed in 2017, and is marked on May 20.

This year, the province asked the BCHPA to adjust its annual celebration to fall in line with the UN convention of May 20. Lana Popham, the very pro-bee Minister of Agriculture and Food, sent out a beautiful document signed by Lieutenant-Governor Wendy Coccia that noted the contributions of the BCHPA and its tech transfer program. It will be added to the BCHPA's archives.

A Very Canadian Fall Annual General Meeting In Salmon Arm

As Canada continues to deal with a new and unsettled relationship with the United States, the BCHPA decided to look entirely within Canada for speakers for its fall AGM and education days.

The event, on October 24-26 at the Salmon Arm Prestige Hotel, is being titled "**Canada No.1**" a homage to the label requirements for pure Canadian honey. It may sound schmaltzy, but it certainly taps into Canadian pride and highlights the great talent in the Canadian bee world.

Speakers include Olav Reuppell, from the University of Alberta; Quebec's Anicet Desrochers from Miels D'Anicet; Brendan Daisley from the University of Guelph's bee lab; UBC professor and Project Apis m research director Marta Guarna, and Kate Mizenka and her partner Ryan from the Elk Root Farm Conservation Society. More speakers to be confirmed.

One significant event will be the retirement of Paul van Westendorp, B.C.'s chief apiculturist. He'll be both honoured and roasted at the AGM dinner. No word yet on who will replace the erstwhile van Westendorp.

The BCHPA has also initiated plans to hold its 2026 AGM on Vancouver Island.

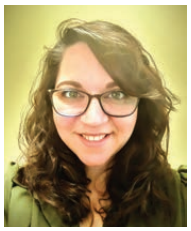
AgriStability Registration for 2025 Extended

The BC government has extended the deadline for registration for the 2025 AgriStability program, a low-cost program that helps farmers – including beekeepers – manage large income losses. Initially, the deadline was April 30. But pressures and uncertainties facing the agricultural sector led the federal, provincial and territorial governments to extend the enrolment deadline to July 31.

Overwintering Loss Report for BC

Lastly, as of this writing we have not seen the final report from the province on its overwintering loss survey. I'll include it in my fall report.

Bee Maid



Marina Oirik

Bee Maid Honey Featured in Two Proudly Canadian Campaigns

Look for the Leaf – Phase 2

This high-profile campaign returned for another season to encourage Canadians to choose local. Promoting products marked with the iconic maple leaf, *Look for the Leaf* appeared across digital, out-of-home, and social media channels in June and July 2025. We were proud to stand alongside other trusted Canadian brands, reminding shoppers to support homegrown favourites—like Bee Maid Honey—during their weekly grocery run.

Savour the North

Launched in late June, *Savour the North* is a new docu-style YouTube series hosted by Olympic gold medalist Jon Montgomery. The series celebrates the people and stories behind Canadian food—from beekeepers to bakers. Bee Maid Honey took centre stage in one episode, where Jon featured a cherished family recipe and shared the important role our cooperative plays in keeping Canadian food authentic and close to home.

As a beekeeper owned cooperative, we're proud to be part of these stories that celebrate the communities, values, and flavours of Canada.



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Honey Bee Import Trade Data

Submitted by Stephen Page

Honey Bee Imports to Canada | 2025 to end of April

Honey Bee PACKAGES

	2025/Mar		2025/Apr		Total	
	C$	KG	C$	KG	C$	KG
Australia	684,813	4,618	848,562	4,966	**1,533,375**	**9,584**
Chile	897,105	5,092	741,987	4,068	**1,639,092**	**9,160**
Italy	0	0	1,189,566	7,731	**1,189,566**	**7,731**
New Zealand	675,715	7,156	2,091,817	12,057	**2,767,532**	**19,213**
United States of America	0	0	4,822	12	**4,822**	**12**
TOTAL	**2,257,633**	**16,866**	**4,876,754**	**28,834**	**7,134,387**	**45,700**

Honey Bee Queens

	2025/Mar		2025/Apr		Total	
	C$	Queens	C$	Queens	C$	Queens
Australia	99,281	2,599	282,634	6,149	**381,915**	**8,748**
Chile	94,128	3,913	298,246	8,559	**392,374**	**12,472**
Denmark	0	0	126	16	**126**	**16**
Italy	0	0	178,075	5,000	**178,075**	**5,000**
New Zealand	181,023	1,102	353,241	2,262	**534,264**	**3,364**
United States of America	0	0	1,178,621	34,359	**1,178,621**	**34,359**
TOTAL	**374,432**	**7,614**	**2,290,943**	**56,345**	**2,665,375**	**63,959**

The Honey Bee Import Trade Data for April is now available. Approximately 45,700 KGs of package bees have arrived in Canada this year, 42% of the total from New Zealand and the rest from Australia, Chile, and Italy. 63,995 queen bees arrived in Canada, 54% from the U.S. with Chile, Australia, Italy and New Zealand.

This preliminary data seems to contain errors including reporting packages arriving from the US, and shows some implied average prices (Denmark and NZ queens for examples) that are not well aligned with historic price trends. We will continue to work with Statistics Canada to address these issues.

Honey Bee Exports from Canada | 2025 to end of April

	2025/Jan		2025/Feb		2025/Mar		2025/Apr		Total		April avg	YTD avg
	C$	KG	C$	KG	C$	KG	C$	KG	C$	KG	price per lb.	price per lb.
TOTAL	**7,342,464**	**1,368,249**	**8,974,018**	**1,711,690**	**5,936,612**	**1,024,503**	**2,994,557**	**490,184**	**25,247,651**	**4,594,626**	$ 2.78	$ 2.50
United States of America	5,859,692	1,133,878	5,385,093	1,143,006	2,214,934	404,881	314,547	49,047	**13,774,266**	**2,730,812**	$ 2.92	$ 2.29
Japan	1,464,310	228,878	3,551,728	563,081	3,701,301	616,762	2,080,518	324,938	**10,797,857**	**1,733,659**	$ 2.91	$ 2.83
Korea, South	0	0	0	0	0	0	241,536	36,168	**241,536**	**36,168**	$ 3.04	$ 3.04
Greece	0	0	0	0	0	0	200,271	51,303	**200,271**	**51,303**	$ 1.77	$ 1.77
China	0	0	18,338	2,160	6,999	902	135,726	24,677	**161,063**	**27,739**	$ 2.50	$ 2.64
Barbados	0	0	15,856	2,901	0	0	16,745	3,113	**32,601**	**6,014**	$ 2.45	$ 2.46
Oman	15,326	4,923	0	0	0	0	0	0	**15,326**	**4,923**		$ 1.42
Taiwan	0	0	0	0	3,240	589	4,896	890	**8,136**	**1,479**	$ 2.50	$ 2.50
Bermuda	0	0	0	0	7,355	863	0	0	**7,355**	**863**		$ 3.87
Burkina Faso	2,929	532	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2,929**	**532**		$ 2.50
United Arab Emirates	0	0	2,534	461	0	0	0	0	**2,534**	**461**		$ 2.50
Hong Kong	0	0	0	0	1,704	310	0	0	**1,704**	**310**		$ 2.50
Saint Pierre and Miquelon	207	38	469	81	270	49	318	48	**1,264**	**216**	$ 3.01	$ 2.66

Total honey exports from Canada in April 2025, considered by value, dropped by 50% from $5.94 million (March) to $2.99 million in April 2025. 490 thousand KG of honey was exported, 10% to the US and 66% to Japan. Total average export prices rose month over month, from $2.63 in March to $2.78 in April. The average price for honey destined to the US rose 17%, from $2.49 in March to $2.92 in April; for honey to Japan the average monthly price rose from $2.73 to $2.92, a 7% increase.

Imports of honey to Canada in April 2025 contracted to $5.64 million from $7.28 million in March, a 23% decrease by value. 758 thousand KG of honey were imported in April 2025 vs 101 million KG in March.

The average price for all honey imported to Canada was $3.38 per pound in April, 3% higher from the average of $3.28 per pound in March. Note that the average price for honey imported to Canada with honey from New Zealand removed from the totals was $2.33 per lb.

Notable monthly honey imports of significant volume under $2 a pound in March include Thailand ($1.60), Vietnam ($0.82) and Moldova ($1.08).

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Swarm Management in Spring

Submitted by Veto-Pharma

A natural event in the lifecycle of honey bee colonies, swarming behavior is a recurring theme in beekeeping that new beekeepers must be taught to recognize and that reliably delivers one or the other interesting or amusing anecdote amongst more experienced apiculturists. Many beekeepers mainly focus on "swarm prevention", while others would never consider managing swarming behavior at all. Instead, they embrace the benefits for honey bee health and varroa population reduction without trying to interfere.

No matter where on the spectrum of "Swarm Management" beekeepers find themselves after a few years of gathering experience: All should be able to interpret their colonies behaviors and activities in springtime to take educated decisions about the level of intervention they deem necessary. Here, we present an overview of the indicators of swarming behavior, possible interventions from beekeepers as well as the benefits of "letting bees swarm".

1. The swarming instinct awakens: springtime is the time for honey bee colonies to reproduce

The instinct to swarm is deeply ingrained in the biology of honey bee colonies. As a natural form of reproduction at the colony level, swarming ensures the survival and expansion of the species. It is triggered by a combination of internal factors – such as population growth, pheromonal changes, and the age or fertility of the queen – as well as environmental cues like increasing daylight and resource availability.[1] As the colony grows stronger, the queen's pheromone signals can become less effective at unifying the large number of workers. This weakening of cohesion within the hive initiates a cascade of behaviors that culminates in the preparation to swarm.[2]

Within the hive, the onset of swarming is marked by several distinct behaviors.[3] Worker bees begin to build queen cells, specialized structures resembling peanut shells in shape, in which new queens are raised. At the same time, the queen's egg-laying rate may slow, and scout bees start to explore the surrounding environment for potential new nest sites.

The hive becomes a hive of decision-making activity – literally – as bees evaluate when and where to divide the colony.[4] These collective decisions are not centrally directed but emerge from complex group behaviors and communication systems like the waggle dance and the buzz-run.[3]

For beekeepers, understanding the swarming instinct is essential. It is not just a biological necessity to the colony but a sophisticated social process that reflects the colony's health and vitality. Swarming is both a risk – through potential loss of bees – and an opportunity to grow new colonies and observe one of nature's most remarkable cooperative behaviors.[1]

2. Spotting early swarming indicators

To prevent the potential chaos of a sudden swarm, it's crucial to spot the early signs of swarming behavior. By keeping an eye on subtle changes in the hive, beekeepers can decide to intervene early, expanding the hive or splitting the colony before the bees leave. The most reliable sign of impending swarming is the presence of queen cells. Finding queen cells in the hive, especially when they are capped, indicates that the colony is preparing to swarm. Beekeepers should take immediate action by inspecting the frames and determining whether the bees have fully initiated the queen-rearing process.[5]

They can then decide whether removal of the queen cell in combination with adding additional space to the hive or splitting the hive will be effective in preventing the colony from swarming. Removing all queen cells or queen cell cups from a colony is not recommended if it is performed as the only measure to prevent swarming. If the colony has already taken the decision to swarm, proceeding this way can result in a queenless colony.[6]

Another key indicator is colony congestion. As the population of the hive grows in spring, the available space for the brood nest, food stores, and bees becomes crowded. A lack of space in the hive can trigger swarming. Bees need adequate room for the queen to continue laying eggs and for the worker bees to store nectar and pollen. If the colony begins to feel overcrowded, the bees will start preparing to split. To address this, beekeepers can add additional space by inserting empty frames or supers to alleviate congestion.[7]

Worker bee behavior can also indicate a developing swarm. Increased activity, restlessness, and frequent departures from the hive indicate that the bees are preparing for the move. One of the most notable behaviors is the buzz-run, which is the prelude to the swarm's departure. This is a form of communication among bees, where scout bees begin to search for a new site, while the worker bees prepare for the exodus. This behavior is often observed in the days leading up to swarming, and it's crucial for beekeepers to notice this shift in hive dynamics.[3]

Changes in the queen's laying pattern represent another strong signal of a coming swarm. As the colony prepares to divide, the queen may reduce her egg-laying output, which leads to a decrease in the overall brood population. When combined with overcrowding and queen cells, this is a clear indication that swarming is imminent. Regular inspections of the hive in spring will help you spot these signs and allow you to act before the bees decide to leave.[8]

Beekeepers should also observe the timing of swarming. While early signs of swarming often appear in late spring as the colony grows, some hives can begin to show signs even in early spring, especially if there is an early nectar flow or unusually warm weather. Bees can respond quickly to environmental conditions, so it's critical to inspect hives regularly during the early parts of the season, especially when the weather changes. Proactively managing hive conditions early on can reduce the likelihood of unplanned swarming.[7]

An increased number of drones in the colony also serves as an indicator that swarming may be near. Drones are male bees whose primary role is to mate with a queen during swarming, and they typically appear in the hive as the colony begins to prepare for reproductive activities. A sudden increase in drone activity and presence may suggest that the colony is nearing its swarming phase.[2] Beekeepers should monitor the population of drones during this time to help gauge the colony's reproductive timeline and act accordingly to prevent a swarm from leaving.[8]

3. No turning back: when you have overlooked the early signs

If you miss the early signs of swarming, the process will often unfold quickly, and there may be little you can do to prevent it once the bees have started to prepare for the split. While swarming is a natural and healthy part of the colony's life cycle, beekeepers who are focused on honey production may find the loss of part of their workforce detrimental. However, all is not lost. Even once the bees begin the process of swarming, there are still some strategies for mitigating the impact.

If the swarm has not yet left, consider splitting the hive. This involves dividing the colony into two separate hives, removing some brood, bees, and potentially a queen cell to create a new colony. Splitting the hive will prevent the bees from swarming completely, as they'll be more focused on settling into their new arrangement. This action also helps reduce the likelihood of swarming in the future by providing more space for the bees to thrive.[1]

If the bees have already swarmed, the first step is to inspect the hive for remaining queen cells. A new queen is essential for the survival of the colony, and her presence will help keep the remaining workers productive. If no queen cells are present or if the hive seems weak, requeening may be necessary. Introducing a new queen can help refocus the colony's efforts and prevent the bees from swarming again.[9]

Additionally, even if the bees have swarmed, the first actions taken after the event can help revive the remaining hive. Colonies that have already swarmed still have potential to recover. New queens will soon emerge and begin laying eggs, allowing the remaining bees to rebuild the colony. However, even after the bees have swarmed, some beekeepers argue that allowing the colony to experience swarming behavior naturally is beneficial for long-term colony health: by practicing limited intervention, beekeepers could reduce their impact on the natural cycle of reproduction while managing the colony in a way that benefits both the bees and the beekeeper.[10]

4. Retrieving swarms

When bees swarm, they typically leave the hive and cluster on a nearby object, such as a tree branch, fence post, or even a nearby building.[11] For beekeepers, capturing these swarms is an excellent opportunity to expand your apiary without purchasing new bees. Swarm collection requires a bit of patience and skill, but with the right tools, it can be a straightforward process.

To begin, carefully locate the swarm and observe its behavior. When bees are swarming, they are typically calm and clustered together, waiting for scout bees to find a new home. Approach the swarm slowly and use a gentle motion to avoid disturbing the bees too much. Protective gear, including a veil, gloves, and a suit, is essential to prevent stings. Even if the bees appear calm, always be prepared for sudden movements. It's also important to consider the environmental conditions—bees may be more agitated in windy or rainy weather, so it is best to wait for clear conditions when possible.

Once you're ready to retrieve the swarm, use a swarm box or a hive with frames to house the bees. Carefully cut the branch or shake the cluster into the box. It's important to ensure that the queen is in the box, as she is the central figure that holds the swarm together. If the queen is captured, the rest of the bees will follow, and the swarm will settle in the new hive.[12] When shaking the bees into the box, be gentle but firm, as bees may try to cling to the surface. If the swarm is particularly high up, you may need a ladder or a long-handled pole to capture it safely. Make sure that the ladder is stable and secure before climbing, as falling can cause injury both to you and the bees.

If the swarm is in a high or difficult-to-reach area, it's important to have the right tools on hand, such as a long-handled pruner to trim branches or a bee vacuum to gently collect the bees into a container. Do not use forceful methods like spraying the swarm with water or pesticides, as this could harm the bees and increase your risk of being stung. Some beekeepers use a swarm lure – a type of scent or pheromone spray – to encourage the bees to move into the collection box if they are not easily accessible.[13]

After securing the swarm in the box, place the box in a sheltered area, allowing the bees to settle down and adjust to their new home. It's a good idea to cover the box with a cloth to keep it dark and calm for the first 24–48 hours. This reduces the chances of the bees trying to fly out immediately. Once they settle, open the box and check to ensure that the queen is present and laying eggs. Continue monitoring the new colony over the next few weeks to ensure they are settling in well.[13]

In terms of safety, be sure to handle the bees with care and always have a first aid kit nearby. Bee stings can be treated by removing the stinger as soon as possible, applying a cold compress, and taking an antihistamine if needed. If you are allergic to bee stings or unsure of your allergy status, always wear protective equipment, and consider keeping an epinephrine injector (EpiPen) on hand when working with bees.[14] Additionally, avoid wearing dark clothing or strong perfumes, as these can attract bees and make them feel threatened. Proper swarm retrieval requires both skill and caution, but with practice, it can become a rewarding part of beekeeping.

5. Does "swarm prevention" make sense?

Swarm prevention remains a major topic of discussion in beekeeping communities, particularly for commercial operations where honey production is a priority. Swarming results in a loss of workers, which significantly impacts foraging efforts and can decrease honey yields. To mitigate the risks associated with swarming, beekeepers often employ various management techniques such as providing extra space in the hive, splitting colonies, or introducing new queens. These practices aim to reduce the likelihood of overcrowding, which is one of the primary triggers for swarming.1 In some cases, beekeepers will use artificial methods like queen excluders or periodic brood box inspections to identify when the colony is nearing a swarm and act before the bees can leave. These efforts help to maintain a consistent workforce, especially during the critical spring months when nectar flows are abundant.[1]

However, preventing swarming entirely may not always be beneficial to the health of the colony. Swarming is a natural part of the reproductive cycle of honey bee colonies, ensuring genetic diversity and the establishment of new colonies. It serves as a crucial mechanism for colonial dispersal, allowing bees to colonize new areas and expand their population. By preventing swarming, beekeepers risk impeding the bees' natural reproduction process and may inadvertently reduce the overall vitality of their colonies. Genetic diversity is particularly important for enhancing the colony's ability to adapt to environmental pressures such as pest infestations, disease resistance, and climate variability.[15]

▶ pag. 19

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Moreover, there is evidence suggesting that colonies allowed to swarm naturally experience lower levels of stress. Constantly managing a colony to prevent swarming can create instability in the hive, leading to higher levels of worker bee mortality and reduced brood rearing efficiency. Natural swarming can reduce the congestion inside the hive, providing the colony with more space to forage, brood, and store resources without the added stress of overcrowding.[10]

Colonies that swarm are often rejuvenated and able to focus more efficiently on maintaining a strong workforce for the following seasons. For beekeepers who prioritize sustainability and long-term colony health, allowing swarming may result in a healthier hive, capable of more efficient pollination, disease resistance, and honey production over time.[16]

While swarm management techniques can certainly benefit those focused on honey yields and reducing population decrease and/or colony losses during the season, they are not always the best solution for promoting bee health. Beekeepers must consider their overall goals when deciding whether to allow natural swarming to occur. Some beekeepers may opt for a middle-ground approach that balances the natural behavior of the bees with their own production goals. For example, some may allow swarming in certain cases but actively intervene when it appears the colony is in danger of losing too many bees. Other strategies might involve allowing for partial splits and queen rearing, which can maintain genetic diversity without significantly affecting honey production. As with many aspects of beekeeping, the decision on whether to prevent or allow swarming depends on the beekeeper's individual philosophy and the long-term health of the hive.[2]

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Winter Colony Losses:

HiveAlive Survey Shows Marked Improvement Compared to National Average

As concerns grow among beekeepers about rising winter colony losses, HiveAlive conducted a comprehensive survey of its customers in **April 2025** to assess how well their colonies survived the 2024/2025 winter - and whether HiveAlive products played a measurable role in improving survival rates.

Earlier this year, multiple reports across the U.S. highlighted severe over-wintering losses, making it more important than ever to evaluate the effectiveness of nutritional interventions. With this in mind, HiveAlive surveyed its customer base to understand what products they used in **Fall 2024 and throughout the winter of 2024/25**, and how colonies fared by spring.

Purpose of the Survey

The aim of this survey was straightforward: to **determine if feeding HiveAlive products going into winter had a positive effect on colony survival.** HiveAlive asked beekeepers to share how many colonies they had in Fall 2024, which HiveAlive products they used to support their hives through winter, and how many colonies survived as of April 2025.

Survey Participation

There were a total of 304 qualified survey respondents. Not included were two respondents due to incomplete data. The results were compared to the Project Apis M National Hive Loss survey which had 846 respondents.

The map below shows the geographic distribution of survey respondents.

A Dramatic Difference from National Loss Rates

According to the most recent Project Apis M Survey, the **national average for over-winter colony losses** sits at a worrying **56%.** In contrast, HiveAlive users reported significantly lower losses:

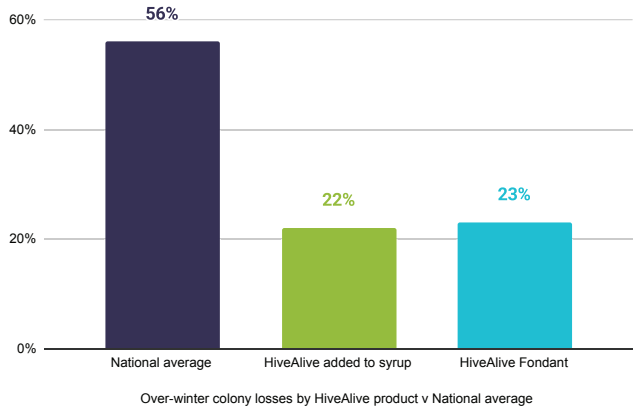

Figure 2: Over-winter colony losses by HiveAlive v National average

These results represent a **reduction in colony losses of over 50%** for beekeepers using HiveAlive nutritional support - an important margin for anyone managing colony health.

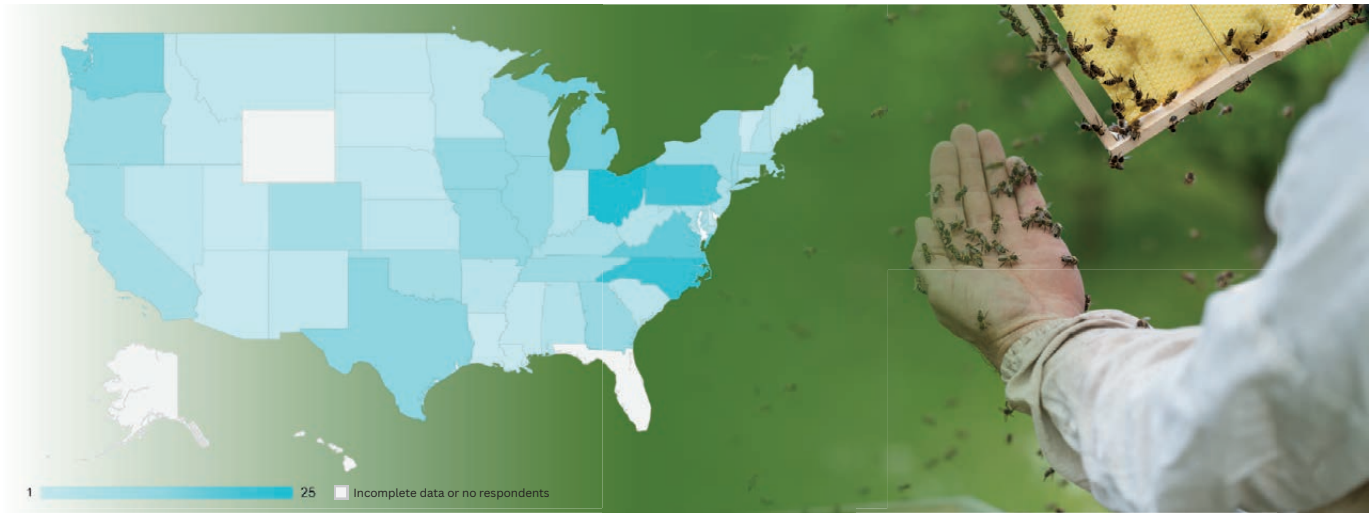

Figure 1: Geographic distribution of survey respondents

[1] https://www.projectapism.org/colony-loss-information
[2] https://www.ars.usda.gov/news-events/news/research-news/2025/usda-researchers-find-viruses-from-miticide-resistant-parasitic-mites-are-cause-of-recent-honey-bee-colony-collapses/

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Performance by Beekeeper Type

The survey also analyzed data by beekeeper operation size, allowing for a comparison between HiveAlive users and national trends reported by Project Apis m.:

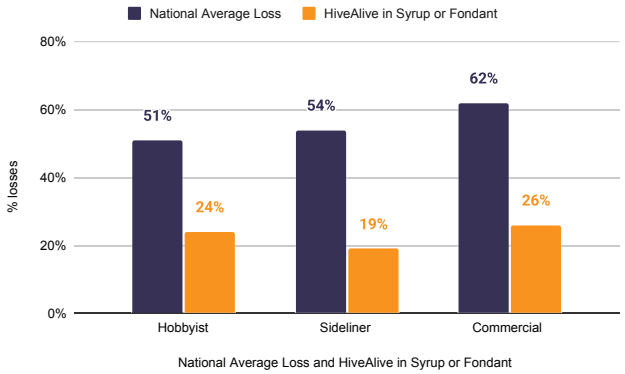

Figure 3: Losses based on beekeeper type. National Average v HiveAlive users

Additional insights into beekeeping practices and reasons for losses

The survey also asked what treatment methods were used. When it came to additional treatments used, **Oxalic Acid** was the most commonly used method among respondents to treat mites - further emphasizing the importance of integrated pest management as part of overwintering success.

Beekeepers were also asked to share **the top reasons they believed contributed to their colony losses**:

Beekeepers with the **highest loss rates** often associated losses with:

- Starvation
- Mite infestations
- Beekeeper inexperience

Interestingly, for beekeepers who had the **lowest rate of losses**, they found that **queen-related issues** were the main reason for their losses - possibly indicating that despite better management the one thing beekeepers have minimal control over is queen loss or failure.

"HiveAlive users reported significantly lower losses than the national average"



Figure 5: Products used in the study - HiveAlive Liquid and HiveAlive Fondant

Conclusion: A Proven Line of Defense Amid Emerging Threats

The results of the Winter 2024/Spring2025 HiveAlive survey clearly show that HiveAlive nutritional products offer a powerful tool for improving winter colony survival. Whether you're a hobbyist, sideline operator, or managing a large commercial operation, the consistent reduction in losses - often more than 50% compared to national averages - demonstrates real-world value.

These findings come at a critical time. New research from the USDA's Agricultural Research Service has linked recent, widespread honey bee colony losses to high levels of deformed wing virus A and B, along with acute bee paralysis virus. These viruses, spread by Varroa destructor mites, were found across collapsed colonies - along with evidence that Varroa mites are developing resistance to amitraz, a key miticide used nationwide.

With over 60% of commercial colonies lost since summer 2024 and an estimated $600 million financial impact, it's clear that beekeepers face an evolving threat landscape. While researchers continue to explore new parasite treatment strategies, this data suggests that HiveAlive's science-backed nutrition can help strengthen bees against these stressors - helping colonies stay healthier and more resilient in the face of mounting biological and environmental challenges.

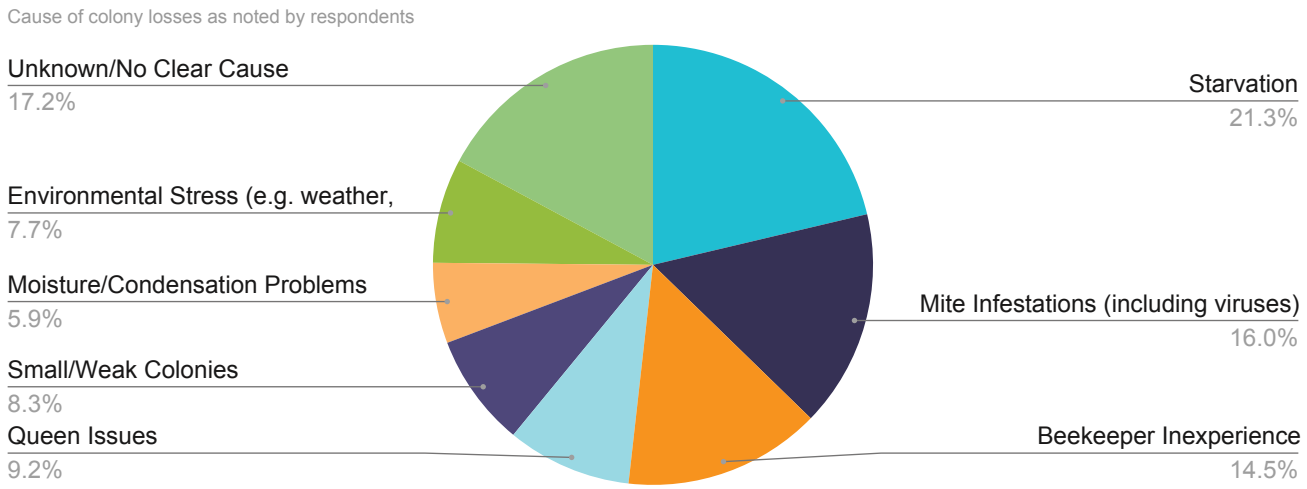

Figure 4: What beekeepers thought were the cause of their losses


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Northwestern Polytechnic's National Bee Diagnostic Centre Receives New Results Driven Agriculture Research (RDAR) Grant

NEWS RELEASE

April 2, 2025, Grande Prairie, Alberta – Northwestern Polytechnic's National Bee Diagnostic Centre (NBDC) is pleased to announce the receipt of a $195,300 Results Driven Agriculture Research (RDAR) grant geared at protecting honey bees.

Over the next two-years, this funding will be used to advance research examining a known parasite risk to honey bee colonies and resistance to common treatments. It is a collaborative research effort that will bring together scientists, beekeepers from across Canada, regulatory agencies, as well as federal and provincial government partners, and will help inform future trade and policy decisions

"Northwestern Polytechnic is proud to contribute our expertise to impactful solutions that will benefit our industries and communities," says Dr. Vanessa Sheane, NWP President and CEO. "RDAR is a valued partner and great facilitator of applied research projects that continue to shape the agriculture landscape in northern Alberta and beyond."

According to Statistics Canada, honey production in Canada is valued at $278 million, with beekeepers providing $4 billion to $5.5 billion in additional value through crop and hybrid Canola seed pollination services.

The Polytechnic's NBDC will be focusing specifically on research to identify miticide resistance in the *Varroa destructor* mite population.

"Beekeeping and pollination management are vital to the Canadian agricultural economy," says Patricia Wolf Veiga, Acting Dean of NWP's Office of Applied Research and Innovation. "This study will provide valuable insights so that the industry has the best tools to combat one of the primary threats to Canadian apiaries."



The Varroa mite and the viruses it carries are the leading cause of honey bee hive loss. The mite attaches itself to the bees, weakening them, and contributing to colony mortality. "Over the last decade, the preferred method to control Varroa mites has been Amitraz acaricide," says Wolf Veiga. "However, beekeepers in the US, Europe, and Canada have recently begun to report reduced efficacy."

Researchers at the NBDC in Beaverlodge will screen Varroa mite populations in Canadian apiaries for genetic mutations associated with acaricide resistance. By working with industry associations, these outcomes will assist beekeepers in making educated decisions to limit and control a mite infestation.

"We're delighted to partner with RDAR," says Wolf Veiga. "This project aligns with their mission to advance the competitiveness, profitability, productivity, and sustainability of agriculture in Alberta and will enable NBDC to evaluate solutions to this destructive pest."

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Wages $16.00-$22.00/hour depending on experience. Performance and/or production bonus may be available.

Duties include but not limited to: feed and care for honeybees, replacement of hives and production of nucs, moving hives, supering hives, detect and report hive health and apply correct disease cures and/or controls, bee yard maintenance, keep field and/or production records, harvest honey, working on extracting line, cleaning extracting equipment and honey house, raise queens, assemble and maintain bee equipment, drive and maintain vehicles. Work is very physically demanding, with long days and heavy lifting. The job is located 2 hours north of Winnipeg in the RM of Fisher NE 33-23-1W in Fisher Branch, MB.

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International Honey Market

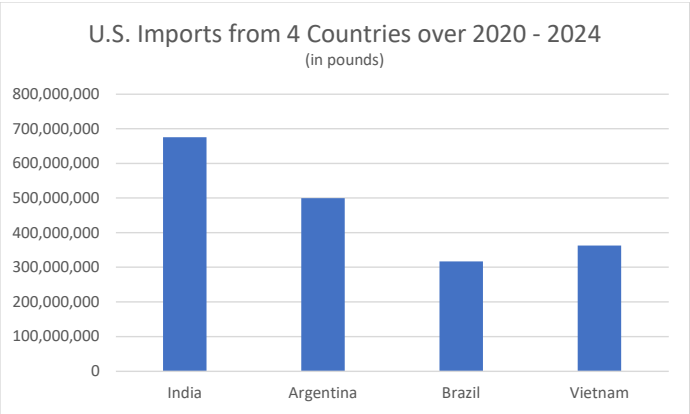
by RON PHIPPS

Introduction

In the classic and daring film about the television industry, Network (1976), the journalist shouts one of the most famous and acclaimed lines in any movie: "I am mad as hell and I am not going to take it anymore!" In the film, windows fly open and a chorus of viewers in unison shout out those famous lines. The world's beekeepers are as mad as hell and they are not going to take the international flood of manipulated, adulterated and dumped pseudo honey anymore! The cartels in their cleverness have created illicit fortunes, devastated and bankrupted beekeepers, jeopardized food security, food authenticity and ecological sustainability throughout the world.

A Sea Change is emerging, manifested by reports of honey packers selling or seeking to sell their companies and suspicions of importers illegally manipulating their corporations. Many who have put on white robes and mounted white stallions have dismounted and changed their garb to become anonymous. The U.S. honey industry is asking, why? There are two fundamental answers: 1) the threats of substantially, if not dramatically, increased antidumping duties on India, coming from the Department of Commerce's Administrative Review, 2) threats of retroactive duties on imports from Vietnam, and the impending "reciprocal tariffs." Considering the magnitude of honey import volumes and the decreasing prices, there is a potentially devastating increase in duties owed from imports over the past years. Honey from Argentina, India, Brazil and Vietnam is subject to U.S. antidumping duties and the volumes over the past 4 years are large as Chart 1 shows. There is great enthusiasm that has been expressed by political leaders for raising revenue in the United States using tariffs.

Chart 1. Total imports from Argentina, Brazil, India and Vietnam 2020-2023



Imports from countries under antidumping orders during the past 4 years constituted an astonishing 79% of all U.S. imports of honey during that period.

There is concurrently a converging collapse in the market for both Authentic Honey and Pollination Services. The challenge for beekeepers is compounded by increased stress upon declining Bee Populations around the world. Alarms were sounded in early 2025 by beekeepers in the U.S. and France about devastating bee losses. U.S. honey producers sent out crisis alerts regarding alarming bee losses of over 50%, with financial losses estimated at $159,000,000, due to colony collapse disorder and mite infestations. Over 1.1 million bee colonies were lost, according to a nationwide survey of beekeepers across the country. Samples of materials from hives were analyzed at The Bee Research Laboratory of USDA-ARS, Beltsville, Maryland, and results will be made available. Canadian beekeepers report significant bee losses and inability to import bees from the U.S. Studies of wild butterfly populations over the past 20 years indicated a population loss of 22% according to a study by the State University of New York, Binghamton. There is a general problem facing all pollinators.

Another factor is the increasing and deepening exposure of adulteration of honey through Multiple Modern Modes of Adulteration. New testing laboratories with academic scientists, including several in the U.S., are adding new tools to the toolbox for detection of adulterants. The magnitude of adulteration of honey is greater than revealed previously, according to government and academic scientists. German laboratories have recently indicated in public and private talks that the findings of adulteration with bioengineered sweeteners of Indian honey samples are up to 80-90%. Indian exporters have themselves confessed that 100% of

Indian honey is extracted immaturely and reduced artificially. This means that 100% of Indian honey in the world market is adulterated by Codex and Apimondia standards. Chinese honey authorities have confessed 95% of Chinese honey is immature. They have pointed out that they call what they sell "water honey." Vietnamese honey exporters have said that they could produce mature, ripened honey, but if they did so, they could not produce the vast quantities nor sell at the low

prices demanded by American packers and importers who dismiss economically motivated adulteration. The use of resin technology, the blending of bioengineered sweeteners to elude specific tests, is well known. Indeed, the Chinese website Alibaba has repeatedly shown that sellers of bioengineered sweeteners claim to be able to evade detection of adulteration by US FDA and US Customs government authorities. This is really brazen!

The prestigious *Times of India* published an article on March 10, 2025, "Beekeepers protest over unfair pricing of honey and adulteration concerns." "Thousands of beekeepers gathered in front of honey-selling factories across Punjab, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh on Monday, demanding fair prices." "The beekeepers marched to these factories in the morning and staged a day-long dharna... with additional demonstrations at the offices and factories of three honey- selling companies in Rajpura, Punjab." "All the beekeepers are suffering losses as companies have refused to purchase honey," said a beekeeper from Himachal. "The beekeepers alleged that companies were not buying their original mustard honey because they were involved in rampant sugar syrup adulteration...by mixing 80% syrup in 20% honey. The sugar or corn syrup costs Rs 50-60 per kg, whereas mustard honey costs above Rs 100 per kg...These companies are even exporting adulterated honey.." "The protesting beekeepers also demanded advanced lab testing, as Nuclear Magnetic Resonance.. 70% to 80% of the honey sold in India's domestic market is adulterated with syrup...'In our religion, honey is considered sacred, but this adulteration is corrupting our traditions too. These companies have turned honey into a sweet poison, exploiting both Indian consumers and beekeepers'" according to the leader of the Bee Farmers' Welfare Society (MKBWS).

Use of new DNA technology has revealed aberrations in retail honey that resulted in significant recalls from retail shelves that have been reported in the European media. The sea change in the understanding of Multiple Modern Modes of Adulteration and new testing developments for adulteration is seeping throughout testing laboratories, many of which dominate the testing of honey samples for honey entering the large North American market and the European market.

There is a classic story of accountants being interviewed for a position in a big firm. They are asked question by the interviewer, which they answer correctly. Another candidate is asked a simple accounting question, and he answers "whatever you want it to be." The latter gets the job. Concerns have been expressed that some packers and importers are no longer seeking the truth of honey authenticity but instead making efforts to ostracize the truth tellers reporting detection of adulteration. Legal liabilities for the testing laboratories are coming into play.

Those liabilities may be highly punitive and severe in the European judicial system.

There is now ample intelligence, data and a number of witnesses to guide a skillful and incisive use of the right testing methodologies and the right parameters to allow us to determine what is authentic honey and what is fraudulent.

Honey Prices in the U.S.; US Production Quantities Down, Productivity Down

Unsold inventories of honey produced in the U.S. are accumulating in the U.S. as of February, 2025. The *National Honey Report* cited prices paid to American beekeepers in the range of $1.85-2.30/lb. for January, 2025. Beekeepers are feeling that prices offered have fallen below the cost of production.

The U.S. market must rise based upon 1) the work on the second antidumping review which beekeepers believe will increase tariffs, 2) the growing attacks against honey adulteration, and 3) Climate Disasters including a global drought which creates increasing wildfires and reduces productivity per hive. The drought has insidious consequences on human, botanical and zoological life forms.

"In 2024 United States honey production in 2024 totaled 134 million pounds, down 4 percent from 2023. There were 2.60 million colonies producing honey in 2024, up 3 percent from 2023. Yield per colony averaged 51.7 pounds, down 6 percent from 2023" according to the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) 2025 report. U.S. honey yield per colony was stable at 47 lbs./colony in 2021 and 2022, and increased to 55 lbs./colony in 2023. In 2023 honey prices paid to beekeepers declined 16% to $2.52/lb. compared to $3.01/lb. in 2022. Average prices increased about 5% in 2024 according to the NASS report.

Chart 2. US Honey Imports in Pounds 2023-2024

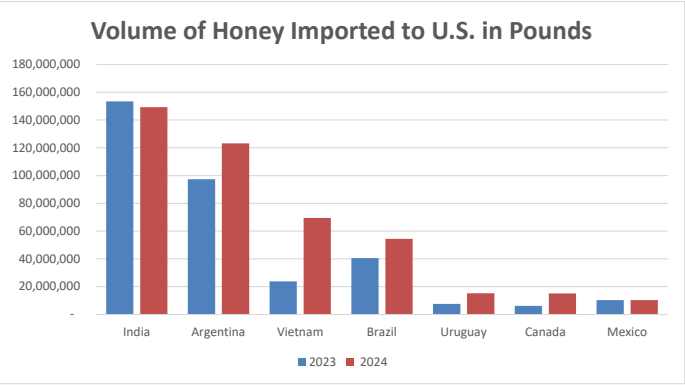
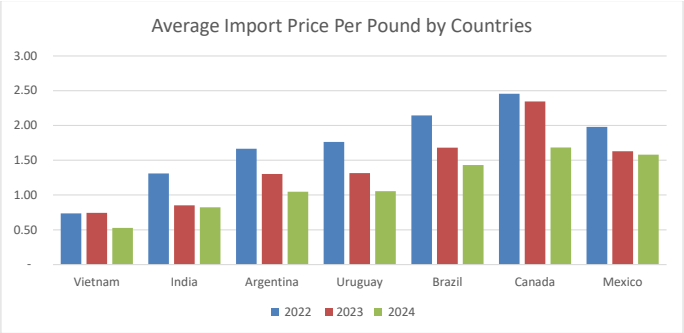


Chart 3. US Honey Average Import Prices (FOB) per Pound by Country



Data Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, *National Honey Report*

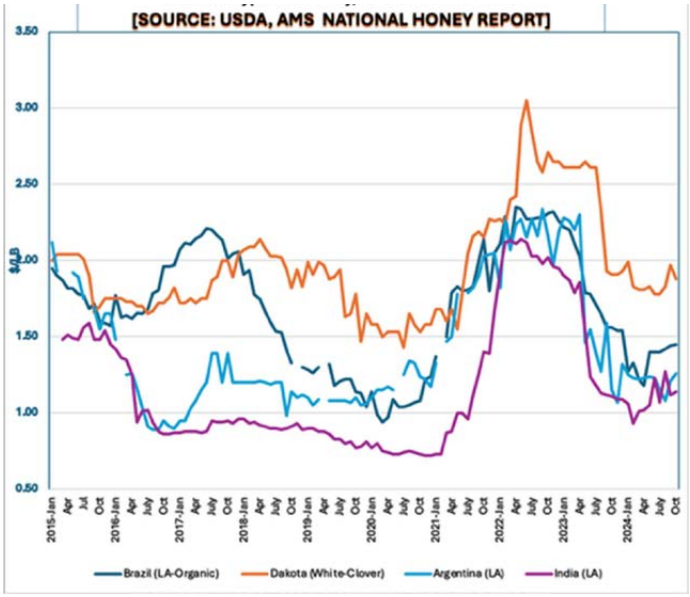
In 2024, average prices from countries subject to antidumping orders included $0.52/lb. from Vietnam and $0.77/lb. from India. India's exports include extra light amber, white and organic honey, making those price levels even more startling and irrational. These are indeed extraordinarily low values. Importers were paying antidumping duties of about 6% on Indian and 60% on Vietnam honey. Prices for most imported honey declined significantly beginning in 2022, despite risks of higher antidumping duties being imposed retroactively. In these low prices and low anti-dumping rates resides enormous vulnerability for gigantic retroactive antidumping duty liabilities.

With the new U.S. administration, there is talk of increased tariffs on many products, including those from Mexico, Canada and China. There is also an introduction of the concept of reciprocal tariffs, meaning that for any given product, if that product is subject to an import tariff by a foreign government, then the amount of the tariff will be matched on exports of that product by that country exporting to the U.S. For example, in the case of China and India, there are huge tariffs on American honey, with India at 65%. Leaders of the American Honey Producers Association have stated that they are actively engaged on the tariff issues with the Trump administration. That engagement is occurring on many levels.

The change in the U.S. government following the 2024 election has brought people who have direct experience of the honey industry into very strong leadership positions. Senator John Thune of South Dakota, who is now the Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate, worked for beekeepers during his summer breaks in his college years. Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem was the governor of South Dakota, the premier producer of authentic clover honey in America. It makes a big difference when people directly understand activities that they govern. Senator Thune is currently co-sponsoring a bill that would support the effectiveness and timeliness of the USDA response for agriculture after extreme weather events, including drought and floods.

The collapse of world honey prices is a profound anomaly. A main factor in the political movement towards the right in the U.S. 2024 election was food inflation. Lower production generally leads to higher prices. The global food supply is in a state of great vulnerability so we should be seeing higher honey prices, not reductions. Climate disasters, including fires and floods, resulted in higher costs of production and prices to consumers. Prices for coffee beans skyrocketed in recent months. Within this context of food inflation, how is it that prices for imported honey continued to decline? And beekeepers' inventory of authentic honey increased? There is a reason and that reason is rooted in the systemic adulteration of honey which creates a situation of "no ceilings to quantities and no floors to prices."

Chart 4. Monthly Prices Paid to Beekeepers and Importers 2015-2024

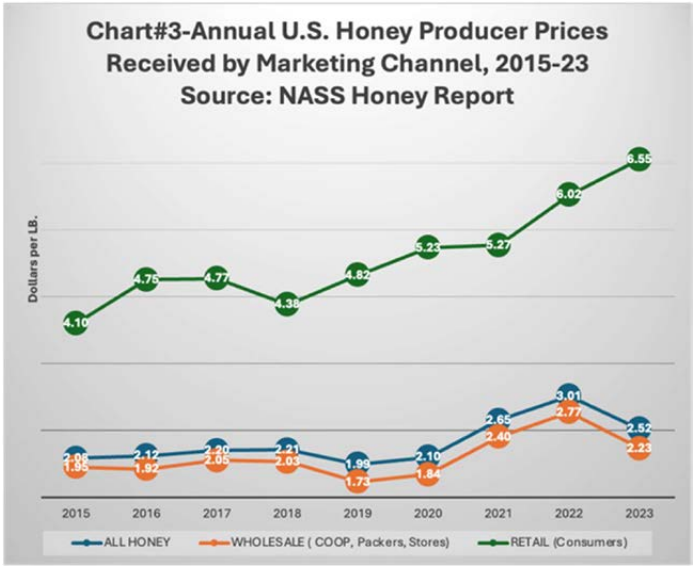


Prepared by Dr. Stan Daberkow, Economist Emeritus, USDA

Both U.S. (Dakota White) and imported honey prices moved in tandem with prices declining from 2015 to 2020. The antidumping order in 2021 resulted in transient price increases in 2022, followed by declines through 2024. Prices from India and Vietnam were consistently the lowest.

Average retail honey prices to consumers began in 2015 at an average of $4.10/lb. and marched mainly upwards to reach $6.55/lb. in 2023. Wholesale prices, however, began at $1.95/lb., drifted down and only reached a high of $2.77/lb. during the Covid pandemic in 2022. Dr. Daberkow has previously shown how retail honey prices rose while the prices of honey paid for raw honey inputs plunged or stagnated, creating a huge profit gap and leaving beekeepers holding the empty bag. Since that chart was published, some of the data used in that report became unavailable.

Chart 5. U.S. Honey Retail and Wholesale prices

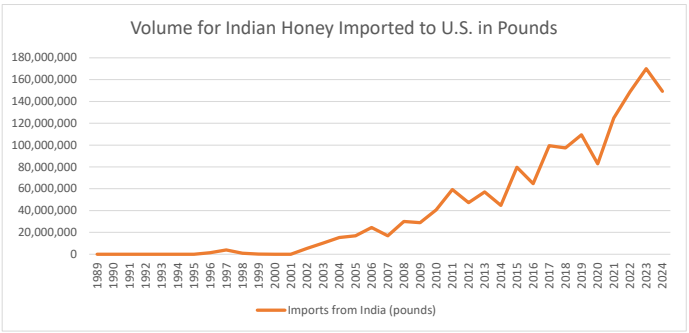


Prepared by Dr. Stan Daberkow, Economist Emeritus, USDA

Imports of honey packaged for retail sale in 2024 reached a total value of about $67,000,000, with India ($11,000,000), New Zealand ($20,000,000) and Turkey ($8,000,000) the top exporters. India was the largest exporter in this category by volume at 10,800,000 lbs. Retail packed honey is not subject to antidumping duties as it is outside the scope of the order. Some have recognized this omission as an error. The total volume in 2024 exceeded the previous 3 years.

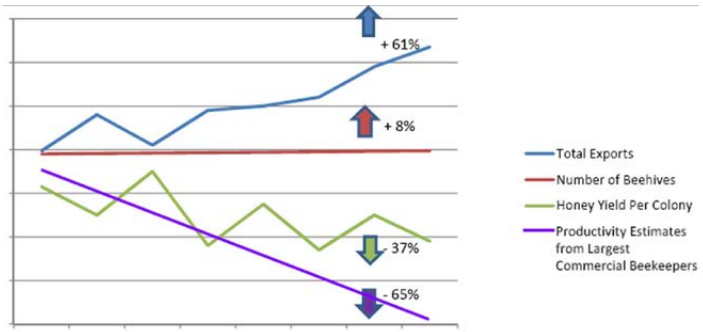
An intrepid observer shared anecdotal evidence for consumer prices at one major national retailer which fell during 2023-2024 for honey bottles (-20%) and bears (-16%).

Chart 6. U.S. Imports of Raw Indian Honey in Pounds



The chart below, which contrasts the dramatically rising world exports volumes of honey, the stable number of beehives and the sharply declining productivity per hive, has been widely cited. It is a reminder of the worldwide contradiction in rising honey export volumes in the face of stagnant numbers of beehives and declining colony productivity. Given this contradiction, and the current tendency towards inflation, prices for honey should rise independent of tariffs.

Chart 7. Honey Exports, Beehives, Yield 2007 to 2014



What has suppressed the rise in honey prices, is the cynical prevalence of systemic adulteration of honey.

Havoc of U.S. Tariff Rates in Flux

Daily changes in tariff threats and implementation characterized early March of 2025. Blanket tariffs of 25% were threatened on Mexico and Canada, and President Trump declared his "love" for tariffs. Reciprocal tariffs were announced to begin April 2, 2025. How these tariffs would affect major exporting countries of honey is unclear, except that Mexican and Canadian exporters could be subject to the announced 25% rate beginning in April. Additional dramatically higher tariffs could be assessed if the threat of "reciprocal" tariffs is implemented. India collects a 65% duty on Indian imports of honey from the U.S., for example.

The American Honey Producers Association is actively engaged on the tariff issues with the Trump administration, along with vital issues of bee health.

The long and surprisingly delayed determination of final antidumping rates for the First Period of Review in the honey antidumping case is scheduled to come to its end. There is both a threat of sharp increases and the possibility of a decrease. Regarding the Antidumping Order on honey from 4 countries, which was initiated in April 2021, it is anticipated that the Final Determination of honey antidumping rates for Argentina, Brazil, India and Vietnam for the first period of review will be issued April 14, 2025, by the new Republican administration. The period of review began in November 23, 2021 and ended May 31, 2023. Two companies in India, Allied and Indocan, were mandatory respondents for individual examination. Cash deposit rates for Vietnam are about 60%, for India only 6%, for Argentina 9-49% depending on the individual exporters, for Brazil about 10%. If the Final Determination rate is higher than the cash deposit rate, then there will be additional charges. Several Vietnamese exporters were assessed rates in excess of 100% in July, 2024, so there could be significant additional duties. If the Final Determination rate is lower, then funds could be returned to the importers who pay the duties. The abysmally low prices of honey from India (about $0.77/lb. in 2024) indicate that the Final duty rate in contrast could be dramatically increased

from the low rate of 0.59% assessed in July, 2024. It is widely believed that geopolitical considerations under the previous administration led to irrationally low antidumping rates for India in the initial DOC determination. In addition, the failure to do the intrusive field investigation that the law requires (and was done for Argentina) allowed for political manipulation.

From the macroeconomic perspective, the phenomena of transshipment, false country of origin, and false quality inspection certificates remain active. Threats of new tariffs and antidumping orders being implemented may result in transshipments re-emerging as a way to avoid duties. Transshipment is illegal, and as reported from Europe, is being prosecuted as the fraud it is.

Exports from companies in foreign countries of honey, cars, steel, aluminum, solar panels, etc. which are owned by Chinese entities may be subject to the China tariffs rates which were announced by the Trump administration, not the tariffs for the third country which exported the goods. For example if country X hosts a Chinese factory, those products will be subject to China's tariff, not the tariff for country X. This is specifically a way to prevent transshipment of products subject to high Chinese duty rates. As China aggressively purchases strategic resources throughout the globe, this mode of customs fraud could resume.

Comments on International Markets

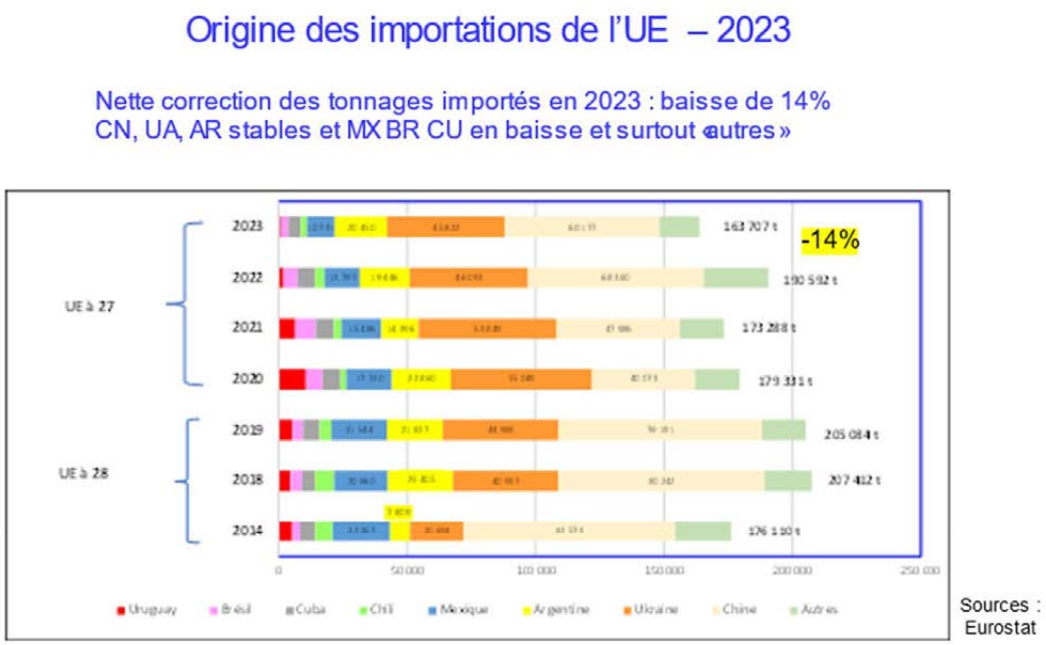
Argentina reports their current 2025 crop is above average, but not a bumper crop. Best of all, Argentina's bees are healthy, in contrast to bees in North America. The weather was volatile, and extreme heat and torrential rains followed by flooding and runoff left their mark. Yields rose for some beekeepers, and "the increase in the area devoted to sunflower cultivation was very important, and this had a significant impact on the final harvest volume" (Espacio Apicola newsletter).

Other countries have tried to use Chinese resin technology to give the appearance of organic honey by removing antibiotics, residues and other contaminants. But in the U.S., the use of resin technology is illegal for any products sold as honey.

Brazil is the epicenter of the export of organic honey and has a unique position. In the past 3 years, the price of Brazil's organic precipitously declined. Currently, demand for Brazilian organic has increased and prices are rising in the first months of 2025. The demand for authentic organic honey with low glyphosate levels is great and prices have risen.

Due to the omnipresence of glyphosate it is very difficult to find organic honey free of it, since it migrates through atmospheric and water systems. Northeast Brazil is the major producer with low levels. Imports of Brazilian Organic honey reached 50 million pounds in 2024, having increased during the past 3 years.

Chart 8. Origin of honey imports of the European Union 2023



- **2 pays (Chine, Ukraine)** = 65% du total
- **4 pays (Chine, Ukraine, Mexique, Argentine)**= 84% du total

Beekeepers in Nicaragua have reported declines in honey prices, although production was down, and the declines occurred after Indian investors bought control of a honey trading company.

Reports from Europe indicate in general that after the invasion of Ukraine, there was an explosion in prices for energy and food. However, after peaking during the Covid years, sales of honey in Europe declined by17% in volume in 2024. The French beekeepers report that at the end of 2023, stocks in the hands of beekeepers were up 17%. Total imports into the EU from third countries declined 14% in 2023, with low priced sources China and Ukraine providing the majority of the volume of honey imports. The reports of adulterated samples in Europe have increased concerns about adulterated honey, and investigations conducted by the Joint Research Center have provided substantial evidence.

This graph, provided by the French SPMF, is beautiful, with colors worthy of the great French impressionist painters. The packaging and marketing of retail honey in France is stunning in its appeal to the diversity, origin and beauty of this product of nature.

It is important to note that Ukraine was originally part of the American beekeepers' antidumping petition. But because of Russa's invasion of Ukraine, Ukraine was removed as a subject of the investigation. Ukraine's exports to the European Union ironically increased despite so many men, including beekeepers, being engaged in the resistance. Honey from China and Ukraine dominate the honey volumes imported into the EU. China and Ukraine have had commercial relationships, including substantial investments from China in many segments of the Ukraine economy.

Honey Adulteration Reports in the Media

As reported in the introduction, the Times of India published an article about the protest of Indian beekeepers (https://timesofindiaindiatimes.com/city/chandigarh/beekeepers-protest-over-unfair-pricing-of-honey-and-adulteration-concerns/articleshow/118856088.cms).

In February, 2025, a news report on honey sold in the United Kingdom was released titled: "Over 90% of Honey Samples from UK Retailers Fail Authenticity Check." All samples from UK beekeepers were genuine, but 24 out of 25 samples from retailers were flagged as suspicious of dilution with cheap sweeteners. https://randoxfood.com/over-90-of-honey-samples-from-uk- retailers-fail-authenticity-check/

In January 2025, 20 samples of honey on Latvian supermarket shelves were tested by an Estonian laboratory using DNA analysis of components and only 6 samples met the standard of authentic honey. Furthermore, the honey was labelled origin Latvia, but is suspected of being primarily from China.

Cambodian authorities detained a Vietnamese woman for falsification of the origin of imported honey in February 15, 2025. The company Chan Honey was raided and the counterfeit honey was seized. The U.S. imported over 1,500,000 kilos (3,070,000 lbs.) of Amber honey from Cambodia in 2024, according to the *National Honey Report*.

Adulterated honey from Turkey was reported to be produced in 43 facilities, and adulterated products are found on supermarket shelves throughout Europe. The U.S. is the largest importer of Turkish honey, according to an article released by *Deutsche Welle* in February, 2025. Imports of Turkish honey to the U.S. in 2024 were over 3 million pounds according to U.S. government data.

From recent reports it is clear that authorities in many countries are collaborating and taking honey fraud seriously. Information has accumulated about the players, the conspiracies and the methodologies used. The adulteration of food products has reached so far that international aid projects to increase the nutritional content of foods for developing countries have found adulteration of vitamins and nutrients essential for increasing the nutritional value of these foods. The consequences of food fraud are wider than many of us have realized.

Honey Adulteration Testing Developments

Scientists have found that Indian honey samples with beet sugar pass the old adulteration tests run by major private laboratories. In July, 2024, testing for Indian Beet Syrup by LC-HRMS became available and 80% of samples were failing to pass. As we have written previously, the invention of new bio-engineered sweeteners seems to advance faster than the ability of testing methodologies to detect the adulteration. Shopping for laboratories that pass samples is unfortunately a concern.

Several samples of Indian honey were analyzed in 2025 and all were judged "suspicious" according to a major laboratory. Signs of foreign sugars were detected. Statements have been made in past years that 100% of Indian honey samples have been judged adulterated. Some parameters which are important markers of adulteration were not analyzed, nor were all the models and modes of adulteration exported by China and utilized by "Eastern Nations" investigated.

For the past 5 decades the testing for authenticity of honey has been dominated by the mythology of the "magic bullet," the magic number, the single parameter; this is manifested in the search for the carbon isotope ratio that would distinguish honey from other sweeteners serving as adulterants. The failure of this approach is evident. It has its parallel in the mythology of the single mode of adulteration, which ignores the multiple modes which have developed in Asia, with China as the principal epicenter of the creation, export and promulgation of these modes. The detection

of economically motivated adulteration (EMA) involves considering the absence of essential ingredients that come from the completed interaction of bees with nectar. I vividly recall how Dr. Gudrun Beckh told me how the 38 Nuclear Magnetic Resonance parameters show that immature honey profiles mirror those of nectar. The use of resin technology creates the absence of certain essential components of natural honey.

The classic Codex definition of honey states that honey is the product of the completed interaction of bees and plants. While some are seeking to weaken that definition, the reality of evolving MMMA requires us to strengthen that definition. That strengthening should also include precluding both: a) illicit modes of production; and b) all known modes of adulteration. The definition also should incorporate an evolving knowledge of the multiple variables which give rise to the diversity of chemical profiles and the multiple tools within the toolbox for detecting adulteration and confirming authenticity. Causative variables are crucial.

This pressure for new honey "standards," occurs at this time when Chinese authorities have taken the Presidency of the International Standards Organization (ISO). The honey standards that the Chinese propose and push would allow the continuation, if not the increase, of production and marketing of adulterated honey. Self serving standards that hide rather than expose MMMA would be devastating.

There have been discussions among major agricultural organizations to establish pilot programs which will promote the production of authentic honey by the utilization of those modes of production and processing that lead to authentic honey, in contrast to the processes that facilitate economically motivated adulteration which benefit small cartels but harm the majority of producers of honey.

The world's supply of authentic honey exhibits an extraordinary and charming diversity of its physical and chemical attributes, flavors, aromas, and benefits, much as do wines, coffees and teas. What is necessary for objective and incisive separation of authenticity from fake honey is an analysis that takes into account the multiple variables which give rise to that diversity.

Without knowing and considering the multiplicity of factors, including the modes of production, it is impossible to have a scientifically tenable distinction between authentic and fake honey. But modern computerization allows the creation of such a data base within a vast array of profiles easily available by AI.

In February of 2024, we were privileged to have extensive discussions with the Joint Research Center in Belgium. Concerns about honey adulteration are being pursued with a sense of responsibility towards the beekeepers and agriculture in general. These discussions are leading to a sea change in the approach for analysis of authenticity. The scientifically advanced JRC is confirming that these causative variables must be considered and specified in creating genuine profiles and guidance for what to look for. There are multiple techniques, analytic tools, and assessment and recording of these variables. It is now less a matter of tools and more a matter of understanding the variables that give rise to the diversity of authentic honey. We note that that diversity includes honeys that are not palatable for human consumption. One of the modes of adulteration (resin technology) illegally removes features chemical components that render some honeys unpalatable.

A year ago from this writing, we met with the Syndicat Producteurs de Miel de France in Bordeaux at the invitation of its President Joël Schiro. Joël is a hero for recognizing and exposing the systemic fraud that has been created, perpetrated and exported by the Chinese honey industry. When confronted with complaints about the problems of beekeepers in France, Chinese exporters described how they could "produce large quantities of honey, sell them at low prices and still make huge profits." By beekeeper's standards, these practices are improper and the pseudo "honey" does not meet Codex standards.

We can see from the meetings we had last year with the European Commission and the prestigious Joint Research Center that progress in fighting and eliminating adulteration of honey is proceeding at an accelerated rate throughout the western world.

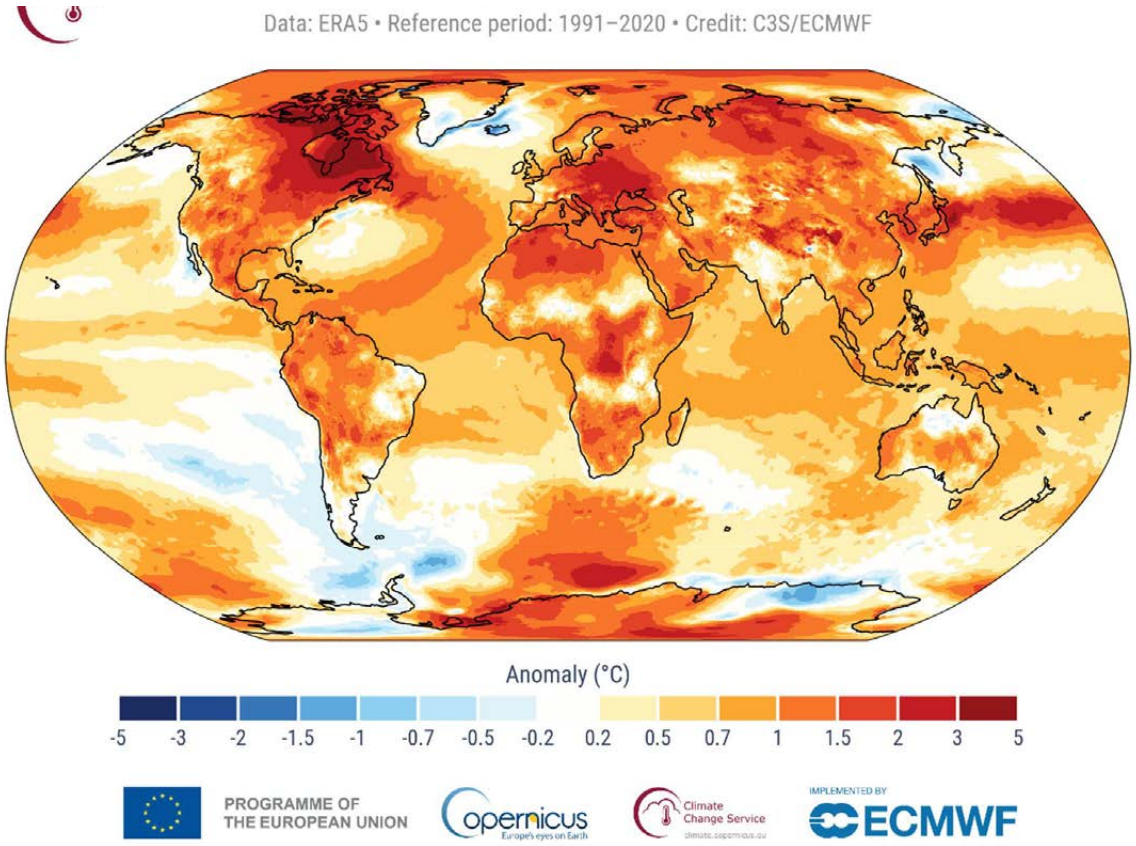
The poignant and powerful recent protests of the Indian beekeepers cited earlier against the systemic adulteration of honey illustrates that it is neither beekeepers in producing countries nor consumers seeking authentic honey who benefit, but only a small cartel of criminals who organize and conduct that systemic adulteration, imposing horrendous consequences for the people.

Agriculture, Honey and Ecology

2024 was the hottest year recorded in the history of the planet. January, 2025, was the hottest January of all the centuries recorded. Rod Scarlett, Executive Director of the Canadian Honey Council wrote in the *Alberta Bee News* that honey production was down in 2024, and "..it is becoming more apparent that weather-related problems compound the issue. Rain, wind, smoke and excessive heat all played a part in the reduced honey production this year." An expert on the honey market from Canada reported that "when we were younger in days we never used to have such massive temperature swings as occur now." In Nicaragua, honey production is half to two- thirds of a normal year due to weather conditions.

Agriculture scientists and strategic planners throughout the globe are concerned about the impact of weather extremes on both production and productivity. Insurance providers are reviewing their risks and the policies that they offer.

Chart 9. High Air Temperature Anomalies in 2024



Surface air temperature anomalies in 2024, relative to the average for the 1991–2020 reference period. A non-linear colour scale is used to enhance the visibility of smaller anomalies and distinguish larger deviations. Data source: ERA5. Credit: C3S/ECMWF.

The chemical and physical processes which underlie the accumulation of heat trapping gases are self-feeding processes. The effect of these processes is to create more frequent, severe, intense and volatile (unpredictable) climate disasters. The alternation between droughts, floods, heat waves and arctic vortexes, the melting of glaciers and the permafrost lead to deterioration of the moisture content in arable lands and decline of nutrients. That leads to decline in productivity in agricultural yields, including honey. A study from the Pennsylvania State College of Agricultural Sciences reported in 2024 that "climate became increasingly tied to honey yields in the data after 1992." The data was collected from all 50 U.S. states.

Fires in unexpected places were in the news in early 2025, and tragic losses occurred in Los Angeles, South Carolina, New York and other areas with drought conditions.

Since beekeeping is so essential to global food security – including foods that are the richest in their antioxidant and polyphenol benefits – attention to the plight of the bees and the beekeepers has intensified. North American and European agriculture are threatened by ecological crises and the international crisis of authenticity of the food supply, including that of honey, compounds ecological threats.

The map of air temperatures around the globe in 2024, printed below, shows that in almost all habitable regions temperatures were above normal by 0.7 degrees C or more.

Focus on Authenticity

The growing alliances for authenticity are achieving great momentum. Various organizations are emerging to create a fundamental Sea Change. Those alliances include the Alliance for Honey Authenticity, the Honey Authenticity Network (UK) (Lynne Ingram and Federico Berron), and an important new organization, The American Honey Institute. This organization is led by Dr.

Bryan McCornack and Gary LaGrange and is affiliated with Kansas State University, one of the great land grant agricultural universities. It has extensive contacts with academic scientists and government laboratories. Experts on agricultural economics, bee biology, and food fraud law will be brought in. Those affected by economically motivated honey adulteration will be brought into the educational process, including large retailers, industrial users and those agricultural industries that depend upon pollination by

commercial beekeepers. LaGrange is founder of a company to train veterans in beekeeping. Beekeeping and working in nature reduce stress. Ironically the veterans went from the stress of battlefields to the stress of a honey market distorted by international cartels and adulterated honey!

Being forced to compete with fraudulent honey is extremely damaging, rendering beekeepers an "endangered species." In March, 2025, the Honey Integrity Act was introduced in Congress.

The legislation would require the FDA to develop a standard of identity for authentic honey and require honey packers to report their findings to the FDA when adulterated honey was detected. We hope that honey organizations, both national and international, will work to ensure that such standards are strong, effective and evolving, and will include reference to proper modes of production and processing of authentic honey.

It has become crystal clear that products are entering U.S. Customs under fraudulent categories and are being marketed to consumers under false categories. This duality of Custom and Consumer Fraud is devastating to American and global beekeepers and, if allowed to continue by governments will be devastating to American agriculture and food security.

Conclusion

Tensions within the honey industry have reached a point of clarity from which we can envision a re-birth of the industry based upon fairness, authenticity, justice and that fundamental principle that one should respect, not disparage the segment of an industry responsible for the production of the product which all other sectors sell to consumers who want to appreciate charming natural products such as authentic honey in its diversity.

A life and death struggle is being played out between cartels handling "honey" and the beekeepers of North America, South America and Europe, who are crucial to global food security.

The Current U.S.-Global Tariff War

With the announcement of the afternoon of April 2 by President Trump, the world has entered a new period of tariff wars. While the major initiative for the tariffs comes from the U.S., there will undoubtedly be retaliatory tariffs. The precise response and consequences are unpredictable. But the disruptive nature of the actions is already being felt. What havoc will result from the tit for tat tariff regime remains to be seen, but the stability of the global economy is at risk. In January, February and April tariff increases were announced.

Here are some country-specific rates mentioned during the April 2, 2025, press conference:

China	34%
EU	20%
Vietnam	46%
India	26%
Thailand	36%
Indonesia	32%
Cambodia	49%
UK	10%
Brazil	10%
Israel	17%
Philippines	17%

In Newton's classic Laws of Motion, one of the fundamental principles is that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. These laws govern the orbits of the planets around the sun, the motion of a baseball, the motions of elementary particles, the motions of foods and all kinds of dynamic systems. We hear already of imposition of export tariffs, increased export prices, and the withdrawal of supply. For example, China has set up factories in many other countries to avoid antidumping duties and avoid the threat of substantially increased duties against Chinese products. That threat today is a reality. At the same time, the ability for transshipment has become more difficult and more risky for those Chinese owned enterprises.

In general U.S.-China trade relations may generate new forms of what was seen in Honeygate, where criminal transshipments and false documents led to arrests and bankruptcies through the

U.S. judicial system.

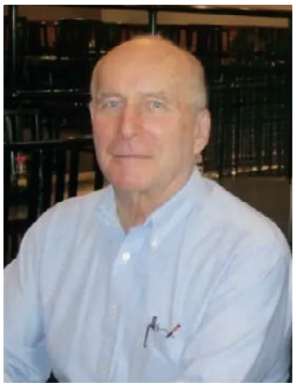
These new and substantial tariffs must not be confused with the honey antidumping duties under the current antidumping order. Those rates are scheduled to be announced by April 15, 2025.

The important distinction is that the antidumping duties in the final review have the potential to charge huge retroactive duties on imports made during the first period of review. Regarding the duties, we should note that they are based on ad valorum values. At present the antidumping duties on Chinese honey are based on weight, since the exporters greatly lowered the declared values, nullifying the high duty rates, several years after the Chinese antidumping duties were put in place. The U.S. government saw through the ruse and adjusted the basis of the duties.

Ron Phipps is Founder and President of CPNA International, Ltd., Vice President, Apimondia Commission on Beekeeping Economy, recipient of National Science Foundation Fellowship in the philosophy of theoretical physics, President of Chamber Players International, organizer of Vivaldi festivals for music, nature and ecology.

In Memoriam
Denis William McKenna

March 6, 1946 - May 16, 2025



Cradled in the arms of his loving family, Denis William McKenna passed away peacefully at 79 after a long and courageous battle with Lewy Body Dementia.

A world renown beekeeper, Denis was born on March 6, 1946 in Petrolia, Ontario. Denis lived a life of curiosity, determination, and quiet brilliance. Though he left school at a young age, Denis was fiercely self-educated — a voracious reader with an insatiable thirst for knowledge. Venturing off as a teenager, Denis made his way to the Peace River region of Northern Alberta, where he found work with a local beekeeper, Fred Smith, who introduced him to the trade that would help define and shape the course of his life. After returning to Ontario for a short time, Denis met and married his beloved wife Liesje in 1970. Together, they made the courageous decision to move across the country in 1971 when Denis began working for a beekeeping operation in Hines Creek, Alberta. It wasn't long before Denis began accumulating his own hives and struck out on his own, building a thriving honey business known as Golden Meadow Honey.

In 1979 the Alberta government was looking for someone to head the development of a commercial beekeeping course at Fairview College. Though Denis had no formal education, he was selected for the position, a testament to the reputation he had already earned in the beekeeping community through his groundbreaking work in queen rearing and over-wintering techniques. His deep knowledge, hands-on experience, and natural gift for teaching made him the ideal candidate. The program he established was the first of its kind in the world and attracted students from across the globe. Here, Denis pioneered a novel queen bee hibernation technique — a development that gained international recognition, allowing him the opportunity to travel the world with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Through his work with CIDA, Denis educated beekeepers in developing countries, helping to establish local apiary programs modelled after the one he created at Fairview College. These initiatives became the roots of self-sufficiency in countless communities, nurtured by the knowledge Denis so humbly and generously shared.

Denis also received numerous prestigious awards within the beekeeping industry and was a proud member of the Canadian Honey Council, further cementing his legacy as a leader and innovator in his field. For a man who left school before graduating, his achievements were nothing short of remarkable. His work revolutionized beekeeping practices and left a lasting legacy in sustainable agriculture across the globe. His son Michael worked alongside him for many years, sharing in both the hard work and the deep connection to the craft that defined Denis's life. Michael also had the privilege of accompanying his father on some of his international assignments, witnessing firsthand the global impact of Denis's work.

Though Denis achieved so much in revolutionizing beekeeping globally, he was most proud of his family, who rallied around him as his disease progressed, dedicating their lives to his care. They were his greatest source of comfort and pride. His legacy is not only in the fields he transformed or the bees he understood so well, but in the family he cherished.

Denis was the proud father of five children: Michael (Michael), Angela, Trisha Demaray, Heather and Jenna (Nadia). He was also a loving father figure to his much loved nephew Brad McKenna (Rhonda). He was a devoted and loving grandfather to Kaleb (Kennedy), Jaden, Landon and Brad's son Robbie, all of whom brought him immense pride and joy. Despite life's changes, Denis remained extraordinarily close with his former wife Liesje, who stood by his side with exceptional devotion during his final years. Her daily visits and caregiving brought comfort, dignity, and love to his final years at the nursing home.

Family meant everything to Denis. He cherished his siblings and their spouses deeply, always proud of their lives and accomplishments. He is survived by his beloved sisters: Pat Poland (Don), Cathy Lawless (Bob), Susan McKenna Grant (Michael) and his sister-in-law Pauline McKenna. Wendy Pounder lived with the family in childhood and remained an important part of his life. He is also lovingly remembered by his numerous nephews and nieces and their families and by his many friends and colleagues who were deeply touched by his presence.

Denis was predeceased by his loving parents, Evelyn and William McKenna, his big brother and best friend, Thomas McKenna, with whom he shared a lifelong bond as well as his much-loved nephew Brent Poland, whom he lost in the war in Afghanistan.

The family would like to extend their heartfelt thanks to the dedicated staff at Berkshire Care Facility, who cared for Denis with kindness, respect, and compassion. We are especially grateful for the warmth and patience shown toward our devoted family, who visited nearly every single day for three years — often in large numbers, filling the halls with laughter, love and a whole lot of chaos. Being there for Denis was not a duty, but a privilege, and a reflection of just how deeply he was loved. A special thanks as well to the ever-patient maintenance team at Berkshire, especially the kind soul who constantly reattached handrails, returned furniture to its rightful place, and gently accepted Denis's tireless efforts to "improve" the layout of the nursing home — including his ongoing (and entirely earnest) mission to relocate the nurses' station, which was bolted to the floor. He truly believed he was helping, and we're grateful for the grace and good humour shown in return.

Over the years, our family formed unforgettable friendships with many of the other residents living alongside Denis — most of them also navigating dementia in their own uniquely beautiful and often hilarious ways. The shared moments were filled with laughter, spontaneous dance parties, heartfelt (if sometimes wildly inaccurate) conversations, and a sense of connection that defied memory. They became like extended family to us, and we will continue visiting, carrying on those relationships that brought so much unexpected joy, humour, and meaning to our days with Dad.

Denis was a humble man who never sought the spotlight, and yet his life's work cast a light that reached far and wide. If Denis ever made you laugh, taught you something, or shared a moment you'll never forget, we'd love to hear your story — chances are, he told it better, but we'll take yours too. He will be deeply missed and forever remembered.In lieu of flowers, the family invites donations in Denis's memory to the Lewy Body Dementia Association at www.lbda.org/donate or to the National Bee Diagnostic Centre by contacting www.nwpolytech.ca which supports the beekeeping research he cared so deeply about.



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The Canadian Honey Council is the national association of beekeepers representing apiculturists across Canada. The CHC provides a forum where producers, packers, professionals, provincial associations and officials from different levels of government can talk and recommend action in the best interests of the Canadian honey bee industry. Currently, the CHC membership consists of representatives of provincial associations with the total number of beekeepers at approximately 13,000 managing over 810,000 colonies.