

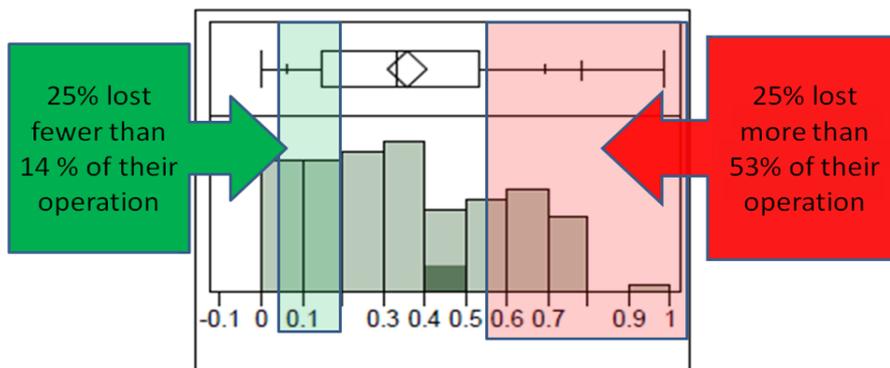


Using beekeepers' real world experience to solve beekeepers' real world problems

The Bee Informed Partnership is a 5 year effort funded by USDA/NIFA (U.S. Department of Agriculture/National Institute of Food and Agriculture). It is a large collaboration between research institutions, Universities, and beekeepers from all over the country.

The main idea behind the Bee Informed Partnership is to get information collected from beekeepers back to beekeepers quickly so they can make more informed decisions. We collect information using online surveys and field collected information (from tech teams). After collection, we summarize and analyze the data using epidemiological methods and return the data back to beekeepers quickly. Our ultimate goal is that beekeepers, using this information, will reduce the number of colonies they lose.

Our need to reduce colony losses is clear. Past surveys indicate average annual losses of more than 30% since 2006. Beekeepers can and do replace losses by making splits but this level of continued losses are unsustainable.



Not all beekeepers are experiencing the same level of loss. The graph shown above from the 2009-2010 Winter Loss survey shows the average annual loss at about 30%, BUT 25% of responding beekeepers lost fewer than 14% of their colonies. (14% or less is considered an acceptable rate of loss). However, you can also see that 25% of responding beekeepers lost more than 53% of their colonies. This is a very large loss and is unsustainable over the long term. The Bee Informed Partnership – wants to understand what the differences are between those that experienced acceptable levels of loss and those that experienced high levels of loss.

The answers are out there. The Bee Informed Partnership will continue to collect information about beekeepers' losses and their management methods and then summarize this information simply and without bias. We want to get significant findings back to you and other beekeepers as quickly as possible to help them make more informed management decisions. Looking at the box below, you can see a result from our Management Survey in 2011. We will be releasing many of these results in March at our website (www.beeinformed.org). Please go there to view other results and sign up to participate in this year's survey.

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Survey Says:

Last year, from 2,749 responding beekeepers, 39% said they treated a majority of their colonies with a varroa mite control product the previous year. Beekeepers who treated colonies lost 20% fewer colonies than those who did not.

For more details on these and other results, go to BeeInformed.org

Be Included. Be Involved. Bee Informed.



Sign up to participate in our next survey now!

Core to our project is the honey bee health database with information networked from many different sources, including management surveys, on the ground sampling, historic diagnostic data, and ongoing National honey bee survey data. Furthermore, we are partnering with Hive Tracks (www.hivetracks.com) as a tool for collecting and sharing information with beekeepers. We are also adding data from HoneyBeeNet (<http://honeybeenet.gsfc.nasa.gov/>) a NASA-sponsored project tracking nectar flows and climatological data. All these data will be collected in a central database to provide beekeepers the tools they need to make more informed management decisions.

The Bee Informed Partnership is not just a repository for data. It is a source of beekeeping management strategies that have been reported to work in your specific region of the U.S. **But for this to work we need responses – lots of responses from a single area, so if you want reports that are specific to your region, you and others in your region need to participate.** We want this database to be a tool to help you make the best management decisions you can in your beekeeping operation. Eventually, we want you to be able to go to the database and mine for Nosema data reported in your area for a specific month, find what feeding strategies worked best for beekeepers in your area to prepare for winter, determine what varroa mite treatments were used in operations that suffered the lowest level of overwintering loss, etc.

Go to our website, www.beeinformed.org, click on the “Sign Up, Participate” button and sign up with your email now. You will be contacted when the next survey is live. Then complete a survey – Be Counted! There are no right or wrong answers and all results will be anonymous. Think of us as a source that you can go to anytime, day or night, to answer your beekeeping management questions using information collected and shared by other beekeepers. Ask other beekeepers to join, add to the tribal knowledge. We need you! The bees need you! The more members of your association that participate, the more useful it will be for your membership.