

Honey production up 2 percent in 2018

Top States: Number of Colonies

(December 31, 2017)

California	1,143,254
Florida	241,176
Texas	210,229
Idaho	130,988
Georgia	119,609
North Dakota	97,105

About the Program

The NASS Bee and Honey Program has long provided honey bee colony and honey production data. After 2015, the program was expanded to track details about colony production and health. State and national data include:

- In the Census of Agriculture, every five years: number of colonies and operations, honey production and sales
- Annual data since 1987: honey-producing colonies; yield, production, stocks; price by color and marketing channel; value of production
- Quarterly data: total, lost, and renovated colonies; colony stressors; colony collapse disorder symptoms

For more information, go to:
www.nass.usda.gov/Surveys/Guide_to_NASS_Surveys/Bee_and_Honey.

To access the data online, go to:
<https://quickstats.nass.usda.gov>.

Statistical Summary

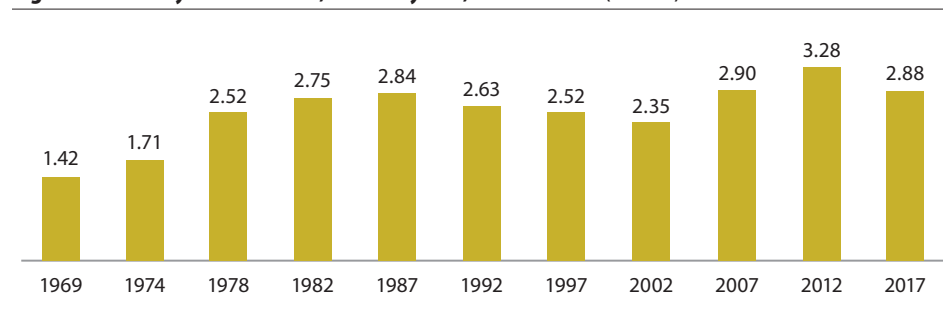
Honey Bees

USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service has collected data on honey bee colonies and U.S. honey production for decades as part of the Census of Agriculture and in annual surveys.

Honey Bee Colonies

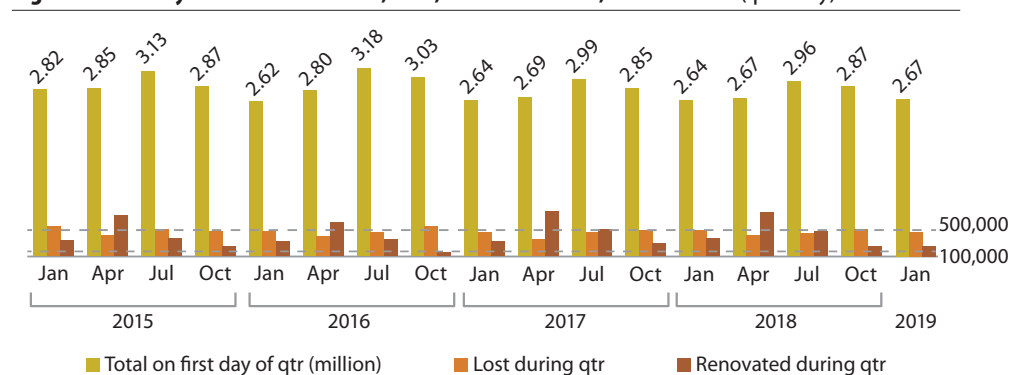
In 2017, the United States had 2.88 million honey bee colonies, down 12 percent from the record high 3.28 million colonies in 2012, but down less than 1 percent from 2007. Fig. 1 shows number of colonies since 1969; similar data are available going back to 1900. Fig. 2 shows that colony losses and gains occur seasonally. The greatest losses occur in the fall and winter quarters that start in October and January. The largest number (*cont'd on p. 2*)

Fig. 1. U.S. Honey Bee Colonies, various years, 1969 – 2017 (million)



Source: USDA NASS, Census of Agriculture (various years, 1969-2017).

Fig. 2. U.S. Honey Bee Colonies: Total, Lost, and Renovated, 2015 – 2019 (quarterly)



Source: USDA NASS, Honey Bee Colonies Report (various years).

(cont'd from p. 1)

of colony renovations occur in the spring quarter starting in April, making total colony numbers largest in the quarters that start in July and October. For example, Fig. 2 shows significant losses in the last quarter of 2017 and first quarter of 2018; after 740,000 colonies were renovated in the second quarter, there were 2.96 million colonies in the third quarter of 2018.

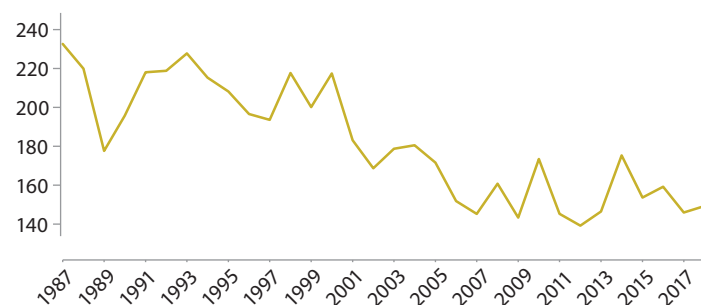
In 2018, varroa mites were the largest stressor in every quarter. Colonies are renovated when they are requeened or they receive new honey bees, generally through a nucleus hive (nuc) or a package of honey bees.

The data are for operations with five or more colonies. On January 1, 2019, the number of colonies was 2.67 million, up 1 percent from January 1, 2018.

Honey Production and Prices

U.S. honey production in 2018 from producers with five or more colonies totaled 152 million pounds, up 2 percent from 2017 (Fig. 3). The average honey yield per colony that year was 54.4 pounds, down 2 percent from 55.5 pounds in 2017. Colonies that produced honey in more than one state were counted in each state where the honey was produced. As a result, at the national level yield per colony may be understated, but total production is not impacted. Only colonies from which honey was harvested are included.

Fig. 3. U.S. Honey Production, 1987 – 2018 (million pounds)

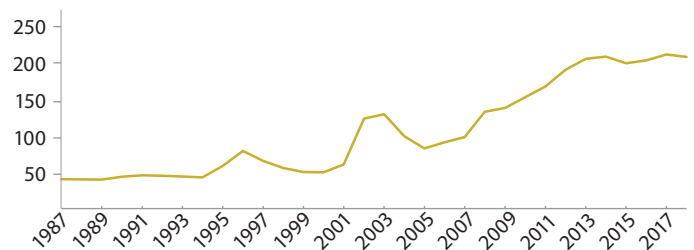


Source: USDA NASS, Honey Report (various years).

Between 2017 and 2018, honey prices in the United States declined from 220.0 cents per pound (the highest ever) to 216.6 cents (Fig. 4). Prices at the national and state level reflect the shares of honey sold through cooperative, private, and retail channels. Prices for each honey color classification are derived by weighting the quantities sold for each marketing channel.

Honey sales in 2017 were \$320 million, up 21 percent from 2012, according to the Census of Agriculture.

Fig. 4. U.S. Honey Prices, 1987 – 2018 (cents per pound)



Source: USDA NASS, Honey Report (various years).

Cost of Pollination

By surveying crop producers, NASS has been able to provide information on the fees they pay for the use of honey bees to pollinate their crops. The per acre fees for states in regions 6 and 7 are higher than in other regions (Table 1 and map). The total value of all pollination for regions 6 and 7 in 2017 was \$273 million, down 7 percent from 2016.

Table 1. U.S. Price per Acre for Pollination, by Region (\$)

	2016	2017
Region 1	66.0	62.4
Region 2	48.4	55.7
Region 3	49.3	55.5
Region 4	40.0	36.1
Region 5	59.9	65.2
Regions 6 and 7	246.8	239.0

Source: USDA NASS, Cost of Pollination Report (December 21, 2017).

Map of U.S. Regions for Cost of Pollination Data

