

Quarterly Colony Loss Survey Information Sheet

Overview:

- Project Code: **115** – Quarterly Colony Loss Survey
- Release: *Honey Bee Colonies* – August 3, 2026.
- Questionnaires mailed approximately one week before each reference date.
- Quarterly Colony Loss Survey reference dates:
 - January 1 – March 31
 - April 1 – June 30
 - July 1 – September 30
 - October 1 – December 31
- Looking for total number of colonies owned, regardless of location.
- How many colonies were in each state AND how many of those colonies were: lost/dead out: requeened and/or received nucs/packages; and colonies added while in that state.
- Keep in mind that it is possible to have more colonies reporting health issues than total colonies reported. This is due to the fact that a colony can exhibit more than one health issue.
- Hives may also have been affected by recent natural disasters. If so, leave a note.
- There are a few “relationships” (if colonies were lost, we’d expect to see colony health issues reported, etc) throughout the survey. Pay close attention to the include/exclude statements to prevent cases of double-counting OR mistakenly omitting colonies.

Terms & Definitions:

Apiary: A place where bees are kept; a collection of hives of colonies kept for their honey. May also be referred to as a “bee yard”.

Colony: A group of worker bees, drones, queen, and developing brood living together in a hive.

Queen: A female bee with a fully developed reproductive system that is responsible for all the egg laying of a colony. Only one per colony, and must be present in the colony for it to be considered healthy.

Queen Cell: A large, peanut shaped cell that contains an immature queen. Often sold, then placed within a queenless colony.

Drone: Male bees which are the product of an unfertilized egg, primary role is to mate with a queen. Drones do not have stingers or participate in nectar and pollen gathering

Worker Bee: is any female that lacks the full reproductive capacity of the queen bee. A typical colony will contain 30-50 thousand workers. Collect nectar and pollen for hive honey and food source.

Renovate/Renovated Colony: This is not an industry term, but is used by NASS to describe a colony that has not failed, but had a new queen, or more bees, or both, added. Does not necessarily mean colony health was perilous. Renovates refers only to existing colonies receiving honey bees, not to be confused with new adds or replacements.

Requeen: The act of adding a new queen to a colony. Commonly done to replace a failing queen. Large commercial operations will requeen preventively every few months.

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Split: Artificially creating a new colony by removing workers and brood from an existing colony and adding a queen.

Nuc (short for nucleus): A small colony of bees that consists of a queen, workers, and a few frames. They are used primarily for starting new colonies or rearing or storing queens. Sometimes added to existing colonies to improve colony health.

Package: A quantity of adult bees (2 to 5 pounds), with or without a queen, contained in a screened shipping cage with a food source. Sold to either start a new colony or bolster a failing one.

Varroa Mites: An invasive species of mite that originally parasitized the Asian Honey Bee. First discovered in the late '80s, the pest has become widespread among North American honey bee colonies. Without treatment, varroa will destroy a colony. Main carrier for the virus that causes deformed wings.

Deadout: A completely failed colony, loss of most workers and possibly the queen. Colony is no longer viable.