





Colony Losses Survey Winter 2007 / 2008

This year we have asked our members to report the numbers of colonies that survived through the winter of 2007 / 2008 and the numbers that were lost. The aim is to build up statistics year by year so that we can compare accurately one year with another.

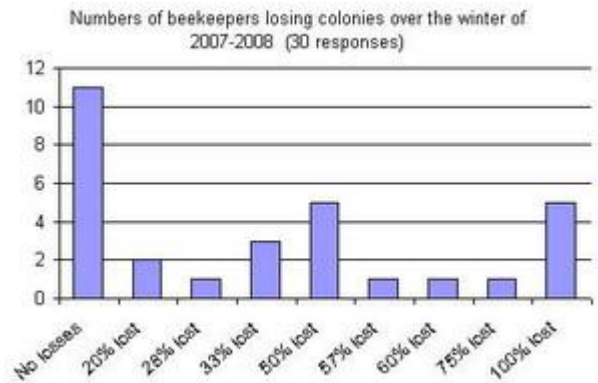
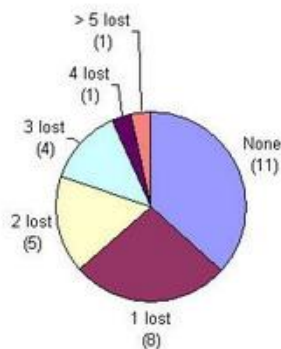
Members were asked to say how many colonies they had on 1st November 2007 and how many **queenright** colonies they had on 15th April 2008. We framed the question in this way because we already had reports of a number of colonies that were still alive in the early Spring but had lost their queens. Members were also asked to record any observations they had about lost colonies and suggest any possible causes.

To date, **30** responses have been received.

-  The total number of colonies at the beginning of the winter was **132**
-  The number of colonies that were **queenright** on 15th April 2008 was **85**
-  The number of colonies lost was therefore **47**
-  The overall percentage loss was **35.6%**

Only 11 members reported no losses and 5 members lost all their colonies. The bar graph shows the numbers of beekeepers reporting different levels of losses. Only 11 of the 30 beekeepers got through the winter with all their colonies intact while 5 beekeepers lost all their bees.

Numbers of hives lost. The figures in brackets are the numbers of beekeepers



The pie chart shows the numbers of beekeepers reporting each level of losses. Only 37% of the members responding (11 beekeepers) suffered no losses whereas one beekeeper lost more than 5 colonies.

Observations: Two observations stood out because they were reported by a number of beekeepers.

Queen failure: The queen appeared to be laying in February and early March but by April there was no brood present and, in many cases, the queen had disappeared. This might have been caused by the very poor summer last year which prevented the queens from mating properly.

CCD-like symptoms: There were a number of reports of colonies dwindling down to just a few bees on one frame. Usually the queen was still present but the tiny colony was no longer viable and soon died out. These symptoms are almost identical to the descriptions of Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) in the United States.