



Honey Industry Facts

BEEKEEPERS AND HONEYBEE COLONIES

There are an estimated 115,000 – 125,000 beekeepers in the United States.¹ The vast majority are hobbyists with less than 25 hives. Commercial beekeepers are those with 300 or more hives. The number of U.S. honey bee colonies producing honey in 2011 was 2.49 million (based on beekeepers who manage five or more colonies).² Many commercial beekeepers migrate their colonies during the year to provide pollination services to farmers and to reach the most abundant sources of nectar. Commercial beekeeping operations are frequently family businesses that are handed down from generation to generation.

¹2012 Industry Survey, *Bee Culture Magazine*

2011 HONEY CROP

Honey production in 2011 from producers with five or more colonies totaled 148 million pounds, down 16 percent from 2010. Yield per colony averaged 59.6 pounds, down 9 percent from the 65.6 pounds in 2010. The average producer price per pound was \$1.729, compared to \$1.619 for 2010. The 2011 crop was valued at \$256.5 million.²

LEADING PRODUCTION STATES²

Honey is produced in every state. The following states are the top five honey producing states for 2011:

State	Pounds Produced	Dollar Value of Production
North Dakota	32,660,000	\$54,216,000
California	17,760,000	\$28,594,000
South Dakota	16,500,000	\$27,225,000
Montana	13,340,000	\$21,878,000
Florida	10,980,000	\$18,117,000

² National Agricultural Statistics Service, Agricultural Statistics Board, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, March 30, 2012.

CONSUMPTION

Total U.S. consumption reached 410 million pounds in 2010 according to USDA’s Economic Research Service. The U.S. per capita consumption of honey is around 1.3 pounds per year. Honey is imported in order to meet total demand. In 2010, the share of imports in U.S. honey consumption was approximately 61 percent. (Source: USDA/ERS, *Sugar and Sweetener Outlook, March 2011*)

About half of the honey sold is through retail channels, with the rest being sold in bulk or for use in the foodservice industry. (Source: NHB Packer Tracking Survey)

AGRICULTURE’S DEPENDENCE

Millions of acres of U.S. fruit, vegetable, oilseed and legume seed crops depend on insect pollination, including honey bees. A 1999 Cornell University study concluded that the direct

value of honey bee pollination annually to U.S. agriculture is \$14.6 billion. This is a 56.7% increase from \$9.3 billion determined by the same study in 1989.

ADDED VALUE

In addition to producing honey, honey bees produce beeswax and help pollinate agricultural crops, home gardens and wildlife habitat.

The USDA has estimated that 80 percent of insect crop pollination is accomplished by honey bees. Approximately one-third of the total human diet is derived directly or indirectly from insect-pollinated plants (fruits, legumes and vegetables).

CROP DEPENDENCE

The almond crop is entirely dependent on honey bee pollination. Without honey bees, there would be no almonds. More than 80 percent of the world's almonds are produced in California.³ To pollinate California's approximately 740,000 bearing acres of almonds⁴ requires more than a million colonies of honey bees.

³ USDA/NASS, *2009 California Almond Acreage Report*, April 30, 2010

⁴ USDA/FAS, *Almonds: 2009/10 Forecast Overview*

Numerous other crops are 90 percent dependent on honey bee pollination. Some of those crops include apples, avocados, blueberries, cherries, cranberries and sunflowers. Other crops such as cucumbers, kiwi fruit, melons and vegetables are also pollinated by honey bees.

LIVESTOCK FEED

The production of most beef and dairy products consumed in the United States is dependent on insect-pollinated legumes (alfalfa, clover, etc.). Although alfalfa hay does not require insect pollination, it is grown from seed that is entirely dependent on insect pollination. Honey bees are one of the pollinators used to pollinate alfalfa fields for seed production in California, a major source of U.S. alfalfa seed production.