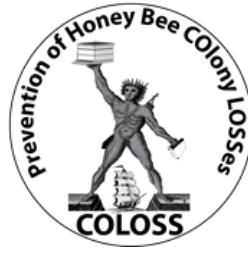


PRESS RELEASE

from COLOSS



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Losses of honey bee colonies over the 2013/14 winter

Preliminary results from an international study

The honey bee protection network COLOSS¹ has today announced the preliminary results of an international study to investigate honey bee winter colony losses. Data were collected from Israel and Algeria and 19 European countries. In total 17,135 respondents provided overwintering mortality and other data of their honey bee colonies. Collectively, all responding beekeepers managed more than 376,754 colonies. A preliminary analysis of the data show that the mortality rate over the 2013-14 winter varied between countries, ranging from 6% in Norway to 14 % in Portugal, and there were also marked regional differences within most countries. The overall proportion of colonies lost was 9 %, the lowest since the international working group started collecting data in 2007.

These figures compare with losses over the same period of 7.85% in England and Wales (provided by the UK Food and Environment Research Agency: see attached spreadsheet for details). Losses of colonies in the USA between Oct 1 2013 and April 1 2014 were also substantially lower.

The protocol used to collect this COLOSS data has been internationally standardized^{2,3} to allow comparisons and joint analysis of the data. A more detailed analysis of risk factors calculated from the whole dataset , as well as further colony loss data from other countries, will be published later in the year.

Co-ordinator of the COLOSS Monitoring and Diagnosis Working Group Dr Romée van der Zee from the Dutch Centre for Bee Research says: *“The contribution of many factors which are correlated to colony losses seem to be very dependent on weather conditions. Colonies built their brood nests late because of the relatively cold spring in 2013. This may have decreased the number of reproductive cycles of the parasitic varroa mite, producing fewer mites. Good weather in the summer then provided excellent foraging opportunities”.*

[Ends]

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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NOTES FOR EDITORS:-

1. COLOSS is a honey bee research association formerly funded by the European Union COST Programme (Action FA0803) and currently by the Ricola Foundation – Nature & Culture, which aims to explain and prevent massive honey bee colony losses. COLOSS does not directly support science, but aims to coordinate international research activities across Europe and worldwide, promoting cooperative approaches and a research programme with a strong focus on the transfer of science into beekeeping practice. COLOSS has more than 300 members drawn from 63 countries worldwide. Its President is Prof. Peter Neumann of the University of Bern, Switzerland. Website <http://www.coloss.org/>

2. Standard protocols are available in The COLOSS *BEEBOOK* . Volumes 1 and 2 are available online at:-

<http://www.ibra.org.uk/articles/The-COLOSS-BEEBOOK>

3. The COLOSS *BEEBOOK* Volumes 1 and 2 are available as hard copies from:-

http://ibrastore.org.uk/index.php?main_page=advanced_search_result&search_in_description=1&keyword=beebook

4. Information on US honey bee colony losses over the 2013-14 winter from the Bee Informed Partnership is available at:-

<http://beeinformed.org/2014/06/state-by-state-colony-loss-2013-2014/>

5. Information on UK honey bee colony losses over the 2013-14 winter from the British Beekeepers Association is available at:-

http://www.bbka.org.uk/news_and_events/honey_bee_colony_winter_survival_rate_greatly_improves



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