

# PRESS RELEASE

from the COLOSS Network



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[www.coloss.org](http://www.coloss.org)

[embargoed until 00:01 GMT on 24/7/13]

## Losses of honey bee colonies over the 2012/13 winter

### Preliminary results from an international study

The honey bee research network COLOSS<sup>1</sup> has today announced the preliminary results of an international study to investigate winter colony losses. Data were collected from 19 countries from Europe, Israel and Algeria. In total, more than 15,000 beekeepers provided overwintering mortality and other data of their colonies. Collectively, they managed more than 280,000 colonies. A preliminary analysis of the data shows that the mortality rate over the 2012-13 winter varied between countries, ranging from 6% in Israel to 37% in Ireland, and there were also marked regional differences within some countries. These figures compare with losses over the same period of 31% and 34% recently reported from the USA<sup>2</sup> and the UK<sup>3</sup> respectively.

The protocol used to collect this COLOSS data has been internationally standardized 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 in the peer-reviewed *Journal of Apicultural Research*<sup>4</sup> later in the year. The data show that Poland and Finland have each year experienced losses of about 17%. Countries in south eastern Europe (Slovakia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia) have had average losses of less than 10%, but in 2012 losses were slightly higher. In central Europe (Germany, Switzerland, Austria) losses rose to above 20% in 2012 but went back to around 15% in 2013. In the neighbouring Netherlands, losses were above 20% for five years, but decreased in 2013 to a level comparable with Germany and Switzerland. Interestingly, we now see losses rising to substantially higher levels in northern countries (Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Ireland, UK) whose losses were around the 15% in the previous years.

Co-ordinator of the COLOSS Monitoring and Diagnosis Working Group Dr Romée van der Zee from the Dutch Centre for Bee Research says: *"We have observed an interesting pattern in honey bee colony losses over the last 3 years. These results emphasise that losses in many countries remain greater than beekeepers consider are acceptable. We believe that many factors including the weather are responsible for these losses, which show patterns over the years which are not bound to administrative borders"*. [Ends]

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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## NOTES FOR EDITORS:-

1. COLOSS is a network 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. The network 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 62 countries worldwide. It is chaired by Prof. Peter Neumann of the University of Bern, Switzerland. Website <http://www.coloss.org/>

2. Information on US honey bee colony losses over the 2012-3 winter from the Bee Informed Partnership is available at:-

<http://beeinformed.org/2013/05/winter-loss-survey-2012-2013/>

3. Information on UK honey bee colony losses over the 2012-3 winter from the British Beekeepers Association is available at:-

[http://www.bbka.org.uk/files/pressreleases/bbka\\_release\\_winter\\_survival\\_survey\\_13\\_june\\_2013\\_1371062171.pdf](http://www.bbka.org.uk/files/pressreleases/bbka_release_winter_survival_survey_13_june_2013_1371062171.pdf)

4. The peer-reviewed scientific journal the *Journal of Apicultural Research* has been published by the International Bee research Association since 1962. It includes original research articles, theoretical papers; scientific notes and comments; together with authoritative reviews on scientific aspects of the biology, ecology, natural history, conservation and culture of all types of bee.

<http://www.ibra.org.uk/categories/jar>



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**COLOSS Working Group Monitoring and Diagnosis: International Honey Bee Colony Losses Winter 2012-13**

Country	Losses	95% confidence interval	95% confidence interval	No. of colonies	No. of colonies lost	No. of beekeepers	Estimated no. of beekeepers 2012	Contact person for the country	Contact persons mail	Contact persons Institute/organisation
	%	Lower limit	upper limit							
Algeria	13.45	11.6	15.3	4665	625	156	22000	Adjlane Nouredine	adjlanenouredine@hotmail.com	University of Boumerdes, department of Biology, Algeria
Austria	17.2	15.95	18.51	19621	3373	1000	25099	Robert Brodschneider	robert.brodschneider@uni-graz.at	University of Graz
Bosnia and Herzegovina	6.18	5.94	6.44	3315	205	72	4115	Violeta Santrac	violeta.santrac@virsvb.com	Public Veterinary Institute of Republic of Srpska
Croatia	9.52	7.65	11.79	9832	936	181	9000	Janja Filipi, Maja Drazic	jfilipi@veleknin.hr; mdracic@hpa.hr	Polytechnic Marko Marulic, Knin; Croatian Agricultural Agency, Zagreb
Denmark	20.91	19.81	22.07	14454	3023	1225	4600	Flemming Vejsnæs	fv@biavl.dk	Danish Beekeepers Association
Estonia	25.53	21.5	30.03	3333	851	95	5934	Aivar Raudmets	mesindusprogramm@gmail.com	Estonian Beekeepers Association
Finland	17.02	15.53	18.62	10518	1790	260	2600	Ari Seppälä/ Lassi Lauko	ari.seppala@hunaja.net lkauko@netti.fi	Finish Beekeepers Association
Germany	15.39	14.89	15.9	73650	11332	6012	100000	Christoph Otten	christoph.otten@dlr.rlp.de	Fachzentrum Bienen und Imkerei Mayen
Ireland	37.08	34.88	39.34	3565	1322	383	2600	Mary Frances Coffey	Mary.Frances.Coffey@ul.ie	University of Limerick
Israel	5.9	4.77	7.29	23663	1397	37	500	Victoria Soroker, Amots Hezroni	sorokerv@agri.gov.il; amots@volcani.agri.gov.il	Agricultural Research Organization
Italy (Veneto region)	12.2	11.72	12.69	1033	126	53	55000	Franco Mutinelli	fmutinelli@izsvenezie.it	Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale delle Venezie
Latvia	19.65	18.08	21.33	17920	3522	519	4300	Valter Brusbardis	valters@strops.lv	Latvian Beekeepers Association
Netherlands	13.71	12.84	14.62	13920	1908	1589	6500	Romé van der Zee	romee.van.der.zee@beemonitoring.org	Netherlands Centre Bee Research (NCB)
Norway	18.15	16.56	19.86	15279	2771	473	2800	Bjørn Dahle	bjorn.dahle@norbi.no	Norwegian Beekeepers Association
Poland	18.11	16.44	19.91	15282	2768	517	51778	Grazyna Topolska	grazyna_topolska@sggw.pl	Warsaw University of Life Sciences
Scotland	31.06	25.17	37.64	470	146	99	1300	Alison Gray, Magnus Peterson	a.j.gray@strath.ac.uk; magnus.peterson@strath.ac.uk	University of Strathclyde, Department of Mathematics and Statistics, Glasgow
Slovakia	9.13	6.81	12.14	4458	407	120	16300	Robert Chlebo	robert.chlebo@uniag.sk	Slovak University of Agriculture
Sweden	22.62	21.61	23.66	26080	5898	1737	12000	Preben Kristiansen	preben.kristiansen@biodlarna.se	c/o Swedish Beekeepers Association
Switzerland	14.67	13.67	15.73	18465	2708	1322	16000	Jean-Daniel Charrière	jean-daniel.charriere@agroscope.admin.ch	Swiss Bee Research Centre, Agroscope

# Honey Bee Colony Winter Losses 2012-13

European Regions

