

## 2024/2025 Maine Honeybee Survey Results

### Demographics

424 beekeepers, representing 4,029 hives, responded to the survey. Most (98.3%) identified as backyard/hobby beekeepers (<30hives) and 95.0% have their apiaries registered with the state of Maine. Most (72.3%) are also members of a beekeeping organization (MSBA, local MSBA chapters, EAS). The average number of years of beekeeping experience was 8.1 years (range 1-70).

Table 1: Beekeeping experience.

Years Beekeeping	N
1 to 3	142
4 to 6	102
7 to 9	51
10 to 20	93
21 to 30	11
31 to 40	10
41+	12

### Practices

Participants started colonies by purchasing nucs (44.8%), splitting already existing hives (38.4%), and buying packages (31.6%). Seventeen percent reported collecting swarms to start new colonies.

Most beekeepers (78.3%) provided supplemental food to their hives during the 2024/2025 beekeeping season. Nearly 44% used sugar syrup to boost food stores and encourage comb building. Most (71.3%) used either fondant, candy boards or dry sugar for supplemental winter feeding. Twenty-four percent of respondents reported using pollen patties or pollen substitute. Around 21% of respondents use Honey Bee Healthy, Hive Alive, essential oils or other feeding stimulants in their hives and 2.4% reported using probiotic supplements in their hives.

Less than 1% of respondents rented hives for agricultural pollination services. Participants reported harvesting approximately 44,497 pounds of honey (n= 415, average 107 pounds per beekeeper, 13.0 pounds per hive). Participants reported approximately 31,044 (n= 280, average 111 pounds per beekeeper, 17.0 pounds per hive) in 2023/2024 and approximately 31,453 pounds of honey (n= 294, average 107 pounds per beekeeper, 20.6 pounds per hive) harvested in 2022/2023.

## Hive losses

Statewide hive loss was 30.8% (summer: 6.2%, winter: 24.6%) between April 2024 and April 2025. This was a 6.5% increase from the previous season where respondents reported a statewide loss of 24.3% (summer: 5.2%, winter: 19.1%) between April 2023 and April 2024.

Table 2: Average losses by county from April 2024-April 2025.

County	N	Summer Loss (%)	Winter Loss (%)	Total Loss (%)
Androscoggin	11	13.8	55.2	69.0
Aroostook	11	5.7	45.7	51.4
Cumberland	108	4.5	18.7	23.2
Franklin	5	5.9	52.9	58.8
Hancock	22	2.5	10.7	13.2
Kennebec	33	6.5	35.2	41.7
Knox	19	4.1	37.8	41.9
Lincoln	24	13.1	12.1	25.2
Oxford	25	14.5	53.3	67.8
Penobscot	34	6.8	25.7	32.5
Piscataquis	5	12.5	20.8	33.3
Sagadahoc	19	9.2	28.7	37.9
Somerset	14	6.2	53.5	59.7
Waldo	19	6.3	29.5	35.8
Washington	7	2.2	24.4	26.7
York	59	12.9	38.4	51.3

For those beekeepers reporting losses, the most commonly reported causes of summer loss were queen loss/failure (46.8%), varroa mites/viruses (26.2%), unknown (18.3%), robbing (15.1%), and environmental factors (14.3%). Two hundred ninety-two (69.9%) respondents reported no summer losses.

For those beekeepers reporting losses, the most commonly reported causes of winter loss were varroa mites/viruses (39.2%), environmental factors (33.4%), unknown (31.1%), queen loss/failure (18.8%), and starvation (12.5%). One hundred twenty-two (29.2%) respondents reported no winter losses.

## **Pest and Diseases**

Varroa mites/ viruses: Over eighty percent (82.2%) of respondents monitored Varroa mites. Of those that monitor for mites, 70.8% did so using alcohol rolls, 43.1% using screen bottom boards, 21.4% using visual survey and 9.2% using drone brood survey. Just under 38% of beekeepers that monitor for varroa report using more than one method to do so.

Beekeepers report using screen bottom boards (22.1%), drone brood removal (3.1%), and brood disruption (0.8%) as part of their varroa mite management strategy. The most common miticides used were Formic Pro (formic acid, 55.5%), Apiboxal vaporization (oxalic acid, 38.5%), Apiguard (thymol, 17.7%) and Apivar (amitraz, 17.2%). Thirty-three beekeepers (7.9%) reported no varroa mite management.

Other Pests/Diseases: Most respondents (97.3%) report using no antibiotic treatments in their hives, 2.2% used Fumadil-B and 0.5% used Terramycin.