

# Beekeeping in Manitoba - 2020 Annual Report

In 2020, the number of registered, active beekeepers in Manitoba is estimated to be 914, which is the highest number of beekeepers in the last 10 years and almost double the number in 2010. Although there has been a steady increase in the number of beekeepers over the last 10 years, the growth rate appears to have slowed down over the last two years (Fig 1). This year, the bee inspectors reported that a number of the small beekeepers that entered the industry five or so years ago have now exited the industry. We are therefore expecting the growth to plateau in the next year or so.

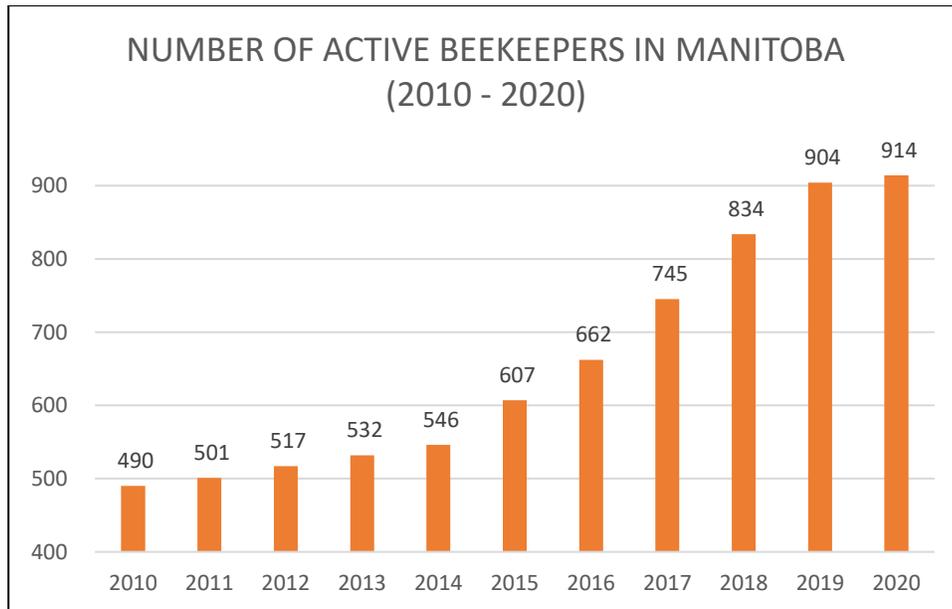


Figure 1. Number of Active Beekeepers in Manitoba (2010 – 2020)

The number of colonies in Manitoba continues to rise and is currently 118,697, which is the highest number since 2010. Similar to the number of beekeepers, the growth rate of the number of colonies in the province appears to have slowed down and is already showing signs of reaching a plateau (Fig 2).

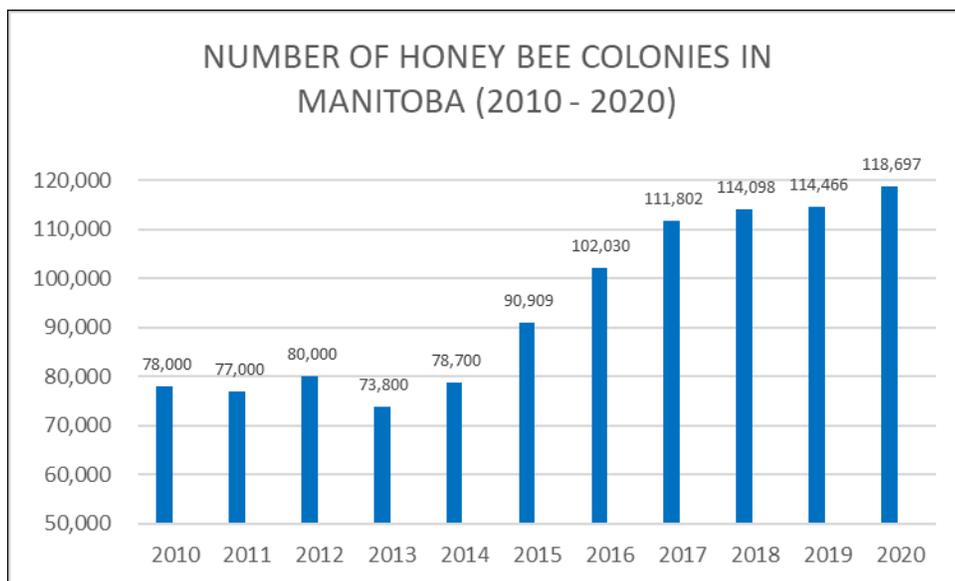


Figure 2. Number of Honey Bee Colonies in Manitoba (2010 – 2020)

At 174 lbs per colony (79 kg/colony), average honey yield in 2020 would not be considered the highest per colony yield in the last 10 years. But when multiplied with the number of colonies, the estimated annual total production of honey in 2020 (20.6 million lbs; 9.4 million kgs) would be considered the highest annual production within the last 10 years. (Fig 3). Due to Covid-19, this year’s honey bee and honey production survey was done completely electronically. Surveys were sent out via email and there was also an online version of the survey for the very first time. In the future, we expect to continue to encourage producers to complete the survey electronically, but we also plan to make the survey available to producers that want to send them in via mail.

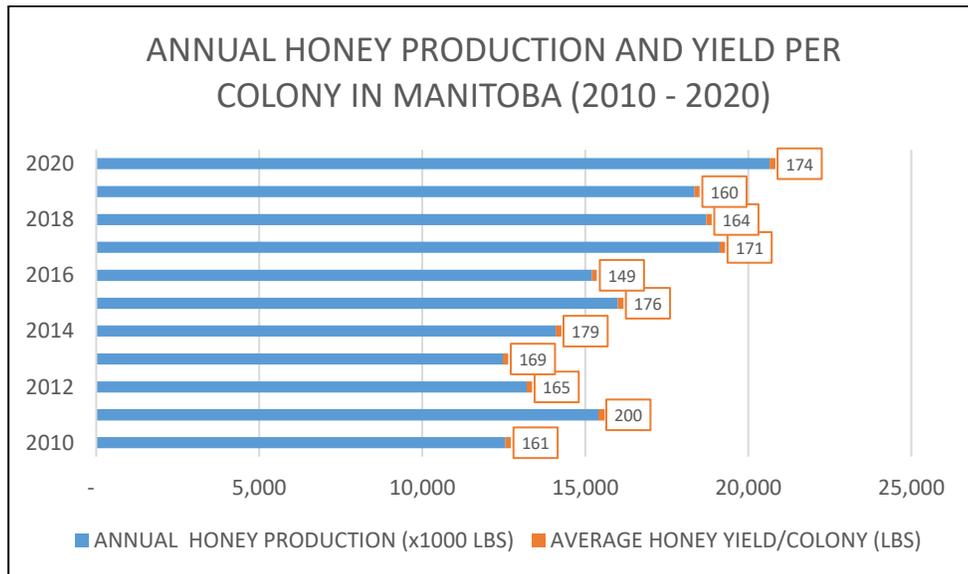


Figure 3. Annual Honey Production and Colony Yield in Manitoba (2010 – 2020)

Overall, the beekeeping industry in Manitoba continued to experience growth, both in the number of beekeepers and colonies. The province was able to produce over 20 million pounds of honey this year, despite all the challenges associated with running businesses in 2020. Not that anyone would want to repeat 2020, but in terms of coping as an industry, Manitoba beekeepers did what they needed to do and came out on top. That is something to be celebrated and certainly worthy of being proud of! It also demonstrates how resilient and resourceful Manitoba beekeepers can be in the face of adversity...including a global pandemic.

Winter Mortality Statistics:

As reported in the Fall issue of the Manitoba Beekeeper, the percent colony mortality in Manitoba this past winter (2019-20) fell within the range of normal at 24.7% and slightly below the moving average trend line. For only two years within the last decade have the provincial wintering loss average been above 25%. In fact, losses have basically remained below 25% since 2013 (Fig 4).

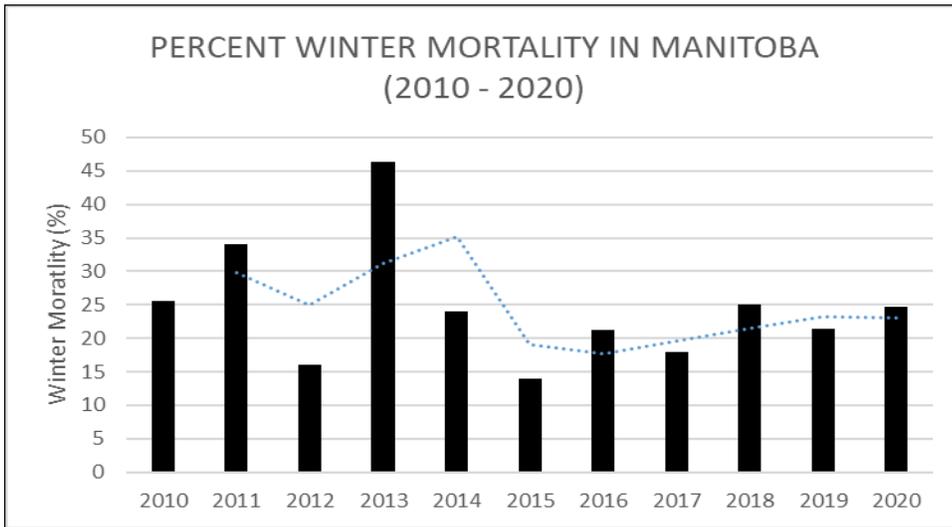


Figure 4. Percentage of Honey Bee Colony Mortality in Manitoba (2010 – 2020)

In comparison to the national average, Manitoba’s winter mortality has typically been lower than the estimated Canadian average. In the first five years of the 2010 decade, Manitoba’s average was similar or above the national average, but for the last five years, Manitoba’s average has generally been below the Canadian average (Fig 5).

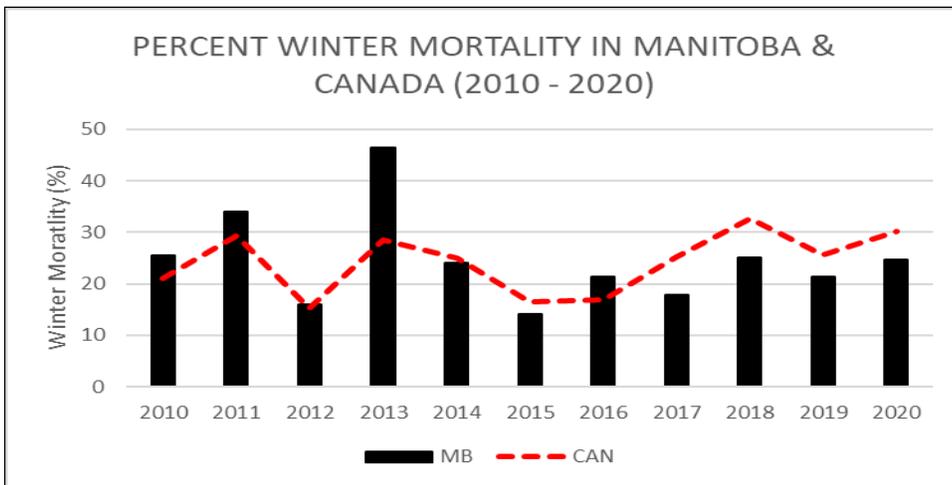


Figure 5. Percentage of Wintering Mortality in Manitoba & Canada (2010 – 2020)

Honey Bee Inspection Program Statistics:

The honey bee inspection program in Manitoba was again contracted out to a 3rd party Inspection Service Contractor. 2020 was the second year of the two-year contract with DLJ Consulting. The target for this season’s inspection program was to inspect approximately 5,200 colonies and the program exceeded the target with over 5,400 colonies inspected. Five (5) cases of AFB were confirmed this spring through the Veterinary Diagnostics Services Lab. There were a few samples submitted to the lab for EFB diagnostics but none of them tested positive for the disease. Figure 6 is a summary of the inspection results over the last decade, which indicates that the ratio of inspected colonies has been climbing and is now approaching 5% of the colonies being inspected annually.

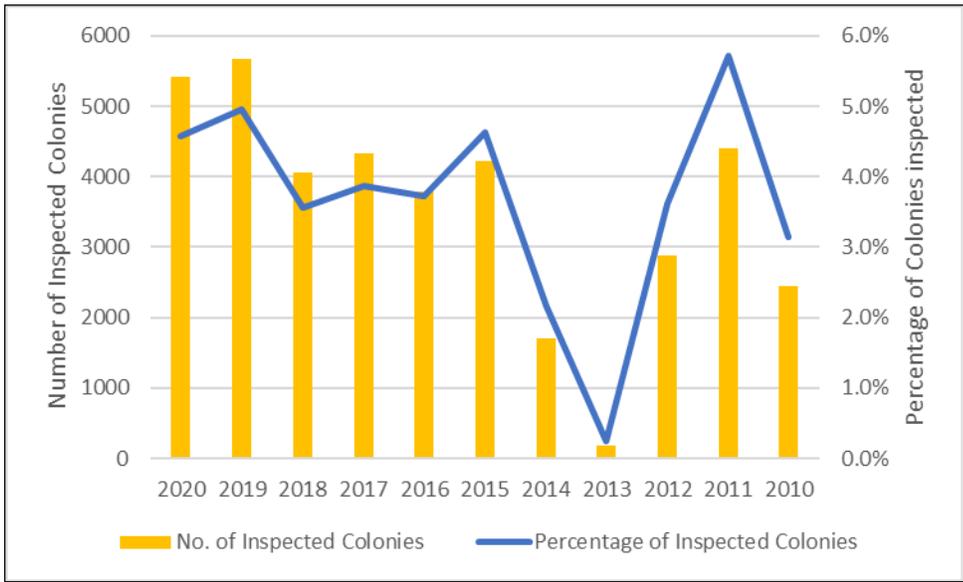


Figure 6. Number of Colonies Inspected and the Percentage of Inspected Colonies in Relation to the Total Number of Colonies in Manitoba (2010 – 2020)