

## 2025 Stahlman Beekeeping E-mail Notes Issue #23a

There are times when I look back and realize how much work goes into keeping bees. I keep some records and have a newspaper dated August 12, 1999. It is titled **They Feel the Sweet Sting of Success**. Tons of honey annually rank area beekeepers among the best in Ohio. It reported that Stahlman's Apiaries a honey refining and beekeeping business operating 600 colonies in Delaware, Licking, Knox and Franklin counties extracted between 18,000 to 24,000 pounds of honey annually. The Department of Agriculture in Ohio recorded honey production as a farm income.

I had watched that number decline from earlier years as the farming area around Columbus, Ohio was gobbled up by new developments. The drop off in honey production in the early 2000's was sharp and if I am not mistaken, the counties around Columbus have almost no commercial beekeeping operations active. In fact, the land where my honey house was located is now developed housing. In the 1990's hive losses were around 30% compared with losses in the 1980's of around 10%. Now we are seeing losses of 50% +. Those losses could be made up after the honey was harvested by making splits.

I have often referred to colonies of bees as resources. If one has resources (like 9 hives of bees) it is possible to make splits to make up new strong hives to overcome the expected losses that will come during the winter season. Dead out colonies mean hive equipment is available for making splits. Thus, the wax moth problem is prevented if equipment is filled with bees.

Although I no longer keep a large number of colonies, I still make up splits to grow colonies before winter. I do expect winter losses. I used the method described in this issue to keep my hive numbers in a commercial operation at an approximate equal amount of hives from year to year.

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