



MEDIA RELEASE
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Survey shows NZ bee loss is low

New Zealand's honey bee population continues to grow - with queen problems, varroa mite, starvation and wasps - the leading causes of bee loss, according to annual survey.

The Ministry for Primary Industries released findings of the 2017 NZ Colony Loss and Survival Survey, demonstrating that bee loss is low on an international scale.

Colony deaths from queen problems such as death, disappearance, or not laying eggs accounted for over a third of losses during the 2017 winter season. Suspected varroa accounted for 17 percent, followed by starvation and wasps. Overall losses averaged 9.8 percent – a lot lower than overseas rates, due to a number of pests and disease not present in New Zealand.

The challenges for beekeepers include competition for apiary sites and overcrowding, especially in the upper North Island.

Hive numbers have increased 18 percent from the year to June 2017.

“The report shows that we still have some work to do - to make sure our bees are well-fed and protected from pests. But, overall, our bee population is thriving - which is good news,” says Agcarm chief executive Mark Ross.

He adds that the survey is critical not only because it informs us on bee health, but because it allows us to make better choices to protect our bee population and to track

changes on colony loss and survival for the future. "Taking care when spraying around bees – or arranging for hives to be moved will help protect them," says Ross.

As a champion of bees, Agcarm will continue to work with the bee industry and the wider agricultural sector, to help ensure a healthy bee population.

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About Agcarm

Agcarm is the industry association which represents crop protection, animal health and rural supplier businesses. Agcarm members distribute and sell the majority of veterinary medicines and crop protection products in New Zealand. Agcarm members promote responsible use of products right through the product life cycle, from research to disposal.

Mark Ross Tel: 04 499 4225 Mobile: 027 442 9965