

BEE AWARE

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News and Notes from The Texas Apiary Inspection Service



Paul W. Jackson

Paul W. Jackson
State Entomologist &
Chief Apiary Inspector
TX Apiary Inspection
Service
Entomology Dept.
Texas A&M University

The continental United States has experienced colony deaths in commercial and migratory beekeepers during 2005-2007. Colony losses have been extremely high in many bee operations; however, some commercial beekeepers have very little or no loss at all. Nevertheless, this has caused a threat to agricultural crops requiring pollination and to our honey production. We are calling this condition "Honey Bee Colony Collapse Disorder" (CCD). During the late 70's and early 80's, Texas beekeepers have experienced this same or similar event of colony deaths. Then, we called it "Disappearing Disease".

Symptoms

I.) Dead Colonies:

- A. Complete absence of bees,
- B. Little or no build up of dead bees in front of hives or in hives,
- C. Colonies contain pupae,
- D. Colonies contain honey and pollen,
- E. Hives not robbed by other bees.

II.) Live Colonies:

- A. Insufficient adult population to maintain brood,
- B. Colony consists of young adult bees,
- C. Queen present,
- D. Cluster reluctant to consume feed.

During the 80's, we were unable to identify the cause of this "Disappearing Disease". No chemicals were identified during this time, no known bee diseases were identified to cause such a problem, and no environmental condition or product such as pollen, plant, i.e. were identified to cause this severe problem. However, when honey bees were placed in a stress related condition, this colony collapse occurred.

The current phenomenon having no singular cause, occurred in the late 1970's and now. History is repeating itself.

The search for causes is still a big mystery.

