

Non-Substantive Change Request for Colony Loss Surveys (0535-0255) and Bee and Honey Surveys (0535-0153) – Oct. 2016

Following the first year of conducting the Colony Loss surveys, NASS would like to make a few non-substantive changes to the colony loss and the bee and honey questionnaires. These changes are at the request of bee and honey producers and in response to conversations NASS has had with the Economic Research Service, Agricultural Research Service and Dr. Bartuska (Deputy Under Secretary of USDA - REE). These changes will impact both the Bee and Honey docket (0535-0153) and the Colony Loss docket (0535-0255).

The target populations are the same for this group of surveys, so the combined changes will result in a net reduction in burden on the respondents.

Quarterly Colony Loss - These changes would begin with the April 2017 survey:

- Section 3, column 5 - The question that asked for the number of colonies that were requeened or received nucs has been split into two separate questions (columns 5 and 6), one asking about queens and the other asking about nucs and packages. Breaking this question apart should not increase burden as it was already being asked and should help clarify what respondents are trying to tell us. This request came from both Dr. Bartuska, ARS, ERS, and beekeepers wanting more detail concerning the re-queening of colonies. The changed questions are marked in blue.
- Section 4 – Colonies Renovated/Added – This section was moved to the annual Bee and Honey questionnaire, this is to lower respondent burden (as the bee keepers now only have to answer these questions once instead of four times). It also allows us to combine these questions with the cost questions, to make it easier for the respondents to report.
- Section 3 - Questions 2 and 2.a. - We added a question on “sold colonies”. This is to help respondents differentiate between the lost colonies asked earlier and those that were sold off the operation. We received word from some respondents that the previous questionnaire version confused them on where to count sold colonies. This change is marked in blue.
- Some office use boxes were added to assist our office staff when the questionnaires are returned. These are also marked in blue.

Annual Colony Loss - These changes would appear on the January, 2018 survey:

- Same as with the quarterly surveys, the questions relating to requeening or adding nucs was divided into two separate questions for each of the four quarters.

- Section 6 – Colonies Renovated/Added – This section was also moved to the annual Bee and Honey questionnaire.
- Section 8 – Colony Health – Since these are generally small operations the operators are not asked to identify the type of disease that they had (bacterial, fungal or viral) they will simply combine them under the label diseases. This matches the form more closely with the Quarterly Colony Loss.

Bee and Honey (Operations with 5 or more colonies), these changes would appear on the January 1, 2017 survey (covering 2016 production):

- Question 6 - Added language to the Co-op and Private Processing, marketing channel questions, to help clarify the difference between member and non-member sales. This came from a conversation with beekeepers and honey purchasers.
- The colonies renovated/added questions in Section 4 from Quarterly Colony Loss survey have been moved onto this form as questions 9 and 10. Before we were gathering this data quarterly and summing. This lowers burdens and helps us calculate a price. Marked in blue.
- The other expense questions have been moved to make room for the transferred ones. Marked in blue.
- Some office boxes have been added to help in processing.

Bee and Honey (Operations with less than 5 colonies), these changes would appear on the January 1, 2017 survey (covering 2016 production):

- The colonies renovated/added questions in Section 4 from Quarterly Colony Loss survey have been moved onto this form as questions 9 and 10. Before, these questions were asked separately on the two different questionnaires, but now they are put together to help respondents answers about honey bee purchases and amount spent at the same time. Marked in blue.
- The other expense questions have been moved to make room for the transferred ones. Marked in blue.