

NATIONAL HONEY REPORT



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Agricultural Marketing Service
Fruit and Vegetable Programs
Market News Division

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www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/fvmhoney.pdf

Number XXXV - # 4

Issued Monthly

April 16, 2015

UPDATED REPORT: SEE PRICES BELOW

HONEY MARKET FOR THE MONTH OF MARCH, 2015

IN VOLUMES OF 10,000 POUNDS OR GREATER UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED

Prices paid to beekeepers for extracted, unprocessed honey in major producing states by packers, handlers & other large users, cents per pound, f.o.b. or delivered nearby, containers exchanged or returned, prompt delivery & payment unless otherwise stated.

- REPORT INCLUDES BOTH NEW AND OLD CROP HONEY -

(# Some in Small Lot --- +Some delayed payments or previous commitment)

CALIFORNIA			
Orange Blossom	Light Amber	\$2.10	
DAKOTA			
Clover	Water White	\$2.15	
Clover	White	\$2.00	- \$2.09
Clover	Light Amber	\$2.09	
Sunflower	Extra Light Amber	\$2.09	
Sunflower	White	\$2.09	
Wildflowers	White	\$2.00	
Wildflowers	Extra Light Amber	\$2.09	
FLORIDA			
Brazilian Pepper	Light Amber	\$1.85	
Wildflowers	Extra Light Amber	\$1.80	- \$2.05
IDAHO			
Wildflower	Amber	\$1.83	
IOWA			
Clover	White	\$2.07	
LOUISIANA			
Wildflower	Light Amber	\$1.95	
MICHIGAN			
Wildflower	White	\$2.01	
Wildflower	Extra Light Amber	\$2.01	
MINNESOTA			
Canola	Extra Light Amber	\$1.69	- \$1.96
Clover	Extra Light Amber	\$1.96	
Clover	Light Amber	\$1.85	
Wildflower	White	\$2.01	
MONTANA			
Clover	White	\$2.00	- \$2.05
NEBRASKA			
Clover	White	\$2.00	- \$2.09
OREGON			
Mint	Dark Amber	\$1.55	
Wildflower	Amber	\$1.83	
TEXAS			
Cotton	Light Amber	\$1.93	
WASHINGTON			
Mint	Amber	\$1.55	
WISCONSIN			
Clover	White	\$2.35	

Prices paid to Canadian Beekeepers for unprocessed, bulk honey by packers and importers in U. S. currency, f.o.b. shipping point, containers included unless otherwise stated. Duty and crossing charges extra. Cents per pound.

Canola	White	\$1.84	- \$1.94
Clover	White	\$1.95	
Mixed Flower	White	\$1.95	- \$2.02

Prices paid to importers for bulk honey, duty paid, containers included, cents per pound, ex-dock or point of entry unless otherwise stated.

ARGENTINA

Mixed Flowers	White	\$1.86	- \$2.13
Mixed Flowers	Extra Light	\$1.86	- \$2.13
Mixed Flowers	Light Amber	\$1.97	

BRAZIL

Mixed Flowers	Extra Light	\$2.00	
Mixed Flowers	Light Amber	\$1.84	- \$1.96
ORGANIC	Extra Light	\$1.92	- \$2.05
ORGANIC	Light Amber	\$1.92	- \$1.95
ORGANIC	Amber	\$1.93	

INDIA

Mixed Flowers	White	\$1.74	
Mixed Flowers	Extra Light	\$1.45	- \$1.67
Mixed Flowers	Light Amber	\$1.33	- \$1.64
Mustard	Extra Light	\$1.48	

MYANMAR

Mixed Flowers	Light Amber	\$1.46	
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TAIWAN

Mixed Flowers	Light Amber	\$1.45	
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UKRAINE

Mixed Flower	White	\$1.70	- \$1.71
Mixed Flower	Extra Light	\$1.68	- \$1.70
Mixed Flowers	Light Amber	\$1.69	
Sunflower	Extra Light	\$1.71	

URUGUAY

Mixed Flowers	Extra Light	\$1.95	
Mixed Flowers	Light Amber	\$1.72	

VIETNAM					Mixed Flowers	Dark Amber	\$1.43
Mixed Flowers	Light Amber	\$1.39	-	\$1.51			
Mixed Flowers	Amber	\$1.49					

COLONY, HONEY PLANT AND MARKET CONDITIONS DURING MARCH, 2015

APPALACHIAN DISTRICT (MD, PA, VA, WV): Cooler temperatures and plenty of precipitation fell on the district during the month of March. Most blooming plants are 1-2 weeks behind normal and ground moisture is at adequate to surplus throughout the district. Beekeepers are seeing losses of colonies from the cold winter temperatures. February was the second coldest on record. Nectar sources for the month were red maples and various early blooming bulbs and wildflowers. Colony activity has been slightly increasing as daytime temperatures fluctuate between warm days and cooler than normal days.

ALABAMA: March 2015 was a mix of both winter and spring weather in Alabama, which is not that unusual. The cold weather stayed in North Alabama primarily. South Alabama had many spring-like days. Swarming started in earnest the last 10 days of March. North Alabama beekeepers have been reporting serious winter losses this spring, which is of great concern at the present time. Many of the winter losses seemed to mimic classic CCD symptoms, which we have not yet seen in Alabama to any extent. Reports of 50-75% losses are common. South Alabama did not seem to experience the same devastating losses, but more than in an average year. Beekeepers are frantically splitting to recover their losses and salvage a honey crop this year. Plants and trees are blooming like crazy statewide and nectar is becoming available for foragers. Red maple, red bud, cherry and many other trees are in bloom. Wild flowers are kicking in as well. Hopefully it will be a good nectar flow this year. Pest concerns remain low for the time being. Colonies are expanding rapidly, so the pest community will soon follow. Honey demand is high, which is the new normal.

ARIZONA: Many Arizona bee colonies remained out of state during the first part of the month for the purposes of pollinating fruit and nut trees elsewhere, including California. However, towards the end of the month, some colonies began returning to the state. This, coupled with warmer weather, has resulted in an increased level of bee activity in the state. Alfalfa, desert and plant blooms were the main sources for nectar and pollen in the state while various citrus plants also served as a source earlier in the month.

Temperatures were at below normal levels during the first week of March, but were at above normal levels for the remainder of the month. The high temperature in Arizona for March was 99 degrees Fahrenheit in Bullhead City, while the low temperature of 2 degrees Fahrenheit was at Grand Canyon.

The amount of rain received across Arizona varied greatly during the month. For the 50 reporting districts, the number receiving precipitation during a one week time period were 50, 5, 38 and 0, respectively. For 2015, 19 stations have received above normal precipitation levels, while 31 have received below normal levels.

According to figures from the National Agricultural Statistical Service (NASS), for 2014 Arizona had 26,000 honey producing colonies (a decrease of 3,000 from the previous year), 1,010,000 pounds of honey produced (34,000 pounds under 2013) with a total production value of \$2,050,000 (an increase of \$77,000 from 2013). The average per pound price for honey in Arizona in 2014 was \$2.02, up from the 2013 average of \$1.89 per pound.

The demand for honey in Arizona was very good.

ARKANSAS: Pollen sources received during March were from holly and some trees. Colonies were in generally good condition. Weather conditions were mild with highs in the 50-60 degrees. Cooler days have kept bees from swarming for the most part. As the hives are opened, drone buildup is being seen. Bees have been carrying in quite a bit of tree pollen. Feeding stations were put out in the apiary to supplement the honey and they are feeding. Supply and demand are both good.

CALIFORNIA: The week began with broad scale troughing bringing cooler temperatures to most of the State. An influx of Pacific moisture associated with a shortwave moved in from the ocean. These two events led to rainfall over most of the state, excluding the southern deserts. Most locations saw between one-half to one and a half inches of precipitation. Most of the agricultural areas of the State saw around half an inch of rain. In the mountains, temperatures were cold and most mountain locations reported between 4 and 8 inches of new snowfall on Tuesday. Although this slightly replenished mountain snowpacks in the central and northern Sierras, snowpacks in the southern Sierras continued to dwindle, with snow only seen at the highest elevations south of approximately Fresno. Temperatures were seasonally cool to start the week, with highs in the 50s and 60s across the valley and coast, 70s-80s in the desert, and 30s in the mountains. Lows were in the single digits and teens in the mountains, 30s-40s in the valley, and 40s for the coast and into the deserts. By midweek, a pattern shift was underway as the large-scale troughing began to move eastward. In its wake, high pressure built over the Great Basin and a modest ridging pattern began to build over the Pacific Coast. This process resulted in an end to precipitation and gradually warming temperatures through the second half of the week. Temperatures at most locations were 10-20 degrees higher by Saturday than they were on Monday. Valley locations saw highs in the 70s, with coastal locations reporting 60s to 70s from north to south; 80s and 90s in the desert, with 50s-60s in the mountains. Lows were in the 40s in the valley, with 50s to 60s along the coast from north to south; 50s in the deserts, and 30s-40s in the mountains. Aside from a fog event in the valley on Sunday morning, no other significant weather occurred during the second half of the week.

In the Central Valley, bees were pollinating berries and late blooming stone fruit. Beehive removal started from almond and stone fruit orchards where bloom was complete. Apple trees bloomed. Where available, throughout the State, bees were feeding on wild mustard, rosemary, borage, dandelions, oaks, apple trees and various wildflowers.

On the Central Coast, swarming is in full swing. The colonies have built up well in spite of the limited forage. Making splits and shaking packages from these colonies does not deter the urge to swarm this year. Beekeepers are feeding some sugar syrup, but the pollen supply is adequate. The sage plants are green but lack much flower growth. There will be no surplus honey from that source. Water for the bees is becoming a problem as most stock ponds have little or no water in them.

FLORIDA: March weather was about average for temperatures and precipitation, and very good for bees and honey production. Bee health was considered to be good. Orange bloom was a little earlier than normal and by late in the month many beekeepers were extracting orange honey. It is too early to know how final production will compare to last year, but many producers who were initially expecting less volume this year are now expecting similar yields to last year. Early prices have been reported in the \$2.45-2.80 range, which is slightly higher than last year. Wildflowers and Ti Ti were

available in many areas of the state. Palmetto and gallberry were just beginning in some areas near the end of the month and should be in full bloom within the first week or two of April. Tupelo was expected to begin also in early April. Supplemental feeding was still required for most beekeepers. The California almond pollination season began a little earlier this year and also ended a little earlier. Some bees had returned to Florida by early March with essentially all bees back in the state by late in the month. Honey supplies were light with good demand and slightly higher prices. Florida continues to gain new beekeepers at a steady pace.

GEORGIA: Throughout the state temperatures were going from extreme cold, to rain, to mild and back to extreme cold, etc. Mother Nature could not make up her mind.

Losses are still being checked, but are less than the previous month. Extra feeding has been needed to keep the bees in top shape and keep the brooding strong for spring. Most of the beekeepers have good management practices in place to prevent losses from beetles and mites. The bees are reported to be in good shape heading into spring and the beekeepers are now able to check on the bees physically with fewer impediments from the weather.

IDAHO, COLORADO, UTAH: Temperatures continue to be much above normal across the states of Idaho, Utah, and Colorado during the month of March, according to the National Weather Service. During the same period, precipitation was below normal in all reporting areas of Idaho. Colorado and Utah also recorded below normal precipitation in most areas of their State. There was however slightly above precipitation reported in South Central Colorado around Alamosa and Colorado Springs. Areas around Cedar City and Vernal, Utah also had slightly above normal precipitation during the same period, according to the National Weather Service.

According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, moisture conditions were normal in the North Central areas of Idaho, North Central and North Eastern Colorado. There were severe drought conditions in Southeast Colorado, South Central Idaho and Northwest areas of Utah during March. The remainder of Idaho, Utah and Colorado had drought conditions that ranged from abnormally dry to moderate.

According to Western US SNOTEL snow/precipitation update in late March, Colorado was at 79% of median on snow water equivalent and Utah was at 58%. Information from the same report indicated that Snow/Precipitation equivalent in Idaho ranged broadly across the State, but totals were generally well below normal for this time of the year. With below normal snow pack across the States, more precipitation will be necessary going into the spring and summer to help produce good foraging plants for top honey production.

Most beekeepers lost some amount of bees from late fall to completion of the California almond pollination. The percentage of losses varied among beekeepers. Commercial beekeepers indicated that the losses were not out of the normal. Beekeepers stated that currently most bees are looking fairly good at this time. Some bees coming back from California were however a little light due to the quick almond pollination and the fact there was not time for an adequate honey flow.

After the almond pollination in California, some commercial beekeepers moved to Southern California locations thereby delaying their return to a colder environment back home in the Mountain States. For the commercial beekeepers that have returned from California, there will be an extreme amount of work to complete in late March and early April to prepare for the upcoming 2015 honey season in Idaho, Utah and Colorado. A few beekeepers are placing the finishing touch on new supers and pallets. Beekeepers are utilizing staging locations to work the hives over prior to moving to final locations for the upcoming spring and summer. It appears that most beekeepers are not detecting very many varroa mites at this time based upon some sticky board tests. However, planned commercial treatments will be applied to control varroa mites in early April prior to any honey flow. In some cases there will be more than one mite treatment. Even though it does not appear that there are very many mite issues at this time, preventative treatments applied within the next few weeks will help keep this issue from derailing what could be a great honey crop in 2015. With new commercial products on the market, some products can be applied in the hive during the season to control varroa mites. In many cases application during season is thought of as a last resort to control an outbreak. Beekeepers are also planning to divide and re-queen any hives as necessary. Since completing the almond pollination in California beekeepers have been feeding bees as necessary mainly utilizing corn syrup/ sugar syrup or a combination blend. It is hoped that in many areas of Idaho, Utah and Colorado some new pollen may become available by the middle of April. Certainly having natural pollen is a great way to kick start the hive and for feeding the new brood.

Wholesale demand for honey is very good and exceeds current supply levels in Idaho, Utah and Colorado. Very little wholesale honey is left uncommitted at this time. A few commercial beekeepers have retained some honey for local retail sales to keep them going until the new 2015 crop becomes available. Some retail prices have been reported for white honey up to \$4.00 per pound. There is a growing concern among commercial beekeepers that some hobbyist beekeepers need to keep up to speed on proper bee management techniques in order to prevent the spread of viruses and mites. Beekeeping is a way of life for commercial beekeepers. They are concerned when hobbyists lack the proper knowledge to adequately care for their hobby hives. This subject has caused some issues when commercial and hobby bees are in close proximity to each other.

ILLINOIS: Temperatures for the month of March were mostly normal to above normal with a few days early in the month that ranged in the upper 70. Temperatures began to change again during the middle of the month which brought high wind, lower temperatures, as well as snow. By the end of the month temperatures began to level. A few Beekeepers report their hives had wintered well due to supplemental feeding as well hives being healthy enough to survive the winter weather. Beekeepers also report a few days early within the month that a few of their hives swarmed as well having cleansing flights as weather permitted. Beekeepers report that they are definitely ready for spring and hoping for a season of good honey production this year. Demand for honey is good at the retail and fairly good at wholesale level. Prices are generally unchanged.

IOWA, KANSAS, MISSOURI, NEBRASKA: Statewide temperatures were above normal for most of the month after the frigid February conditions, which continued into the first week. Lower measurements of snowfall and rainfall, indicated a very dry month. Total precipitation was below normal.

Beekeepers have entered into one of the most busiest months of spring. They were busy with various spring management activities of building, repairing or replacing frames and equipment.

There were various reports of colony loss due to starvation, late mite treatment and extreme cold conditions over the winter, while others report success of winter survival. Almond crop pollinators have returned. Demand for queens and package bees remain high as high prices are being reported. Honey demand and prices remain strong.

INDIANA: Temperatures for the month of March were mostly normal. Early within the month temperatures rose in the high 70s, but dropped again in the low 30s and 40s. A few Beekeepers report some hive losses while others report their bees in fair to good condition. Demand for honey is good at the retail level and fairly good at the wholesale level. Prices are generally unchanged.

KENTUCKY: Beekeepers in Kentucky have suffered hive losses during March due to varroa mite damage, starvation, lack of queens, and record-low temperatures for prolonged periods. Losses across the state are ranging from 30% to 50%, with some hobbyist beekeepers losing 100% of their hives. The current pollen and nectar sources have been skunk cabbage, red maple, serviceberry, and dandelions.

LOUISIANA: Pollen and nectar sources received during March were from various trees and wild flowers. Colonies were in generally good condition. Weather conditions have seen above normal temperatures, with little rainfall. Conditions have been very dry, with a short production period. Supply is low and demand is good.

MICHIGAN: In central Michigan, beekeepers were happy to see the weather break slightly and allow a few cleansing flights during the month. Early reports have indicated that bees fared well and hives seem to be in fairly good shape in the region. A local bee club polled members and survival rates with 500 hives going into winter had a 71% survival rate by mid-March. However, the danger of starvation has not passed with brood nests expanding and expected honey flows still a few weeks away. Beekeepers will remain vigilant with food reserves the next few weeks. Currently silver maple is in bloom, while poplar, elm and pussy willow in early bloom; some warmer days should make these sources available to bees. Demand for honey in local markets has remained strong with some beekeepers out of honey supplies. Reports from the southeast region of the state have indicated high winter losses (53%), with beekeepers seeking new packages to offset losses. One large beekeeper with 270 hives reported only had 65 hives alive by mid-March, a whopping 76% loss, due to the tough weather conditions and varroa mite infestations. There were very few days for bees' cleansing flights and collection of pollen for new broods. According to the annual Honey report released by NASS, Michigan's honey production for 2014 totaled 5.73 million pounds, up 23% from one year earlier. The estimate included honey from producers with 5 or more colonies. The state ranked 8th in production, up one position from 2013. Yield from the state's 91,000 honey producing colonies averaged 63 pounds, compared to 55 pounds in 2013. Honey stocks were 1.84 million pounds, up 87% from one year earlier: the state's honey price climbed 34 cents to 250 cents per pound. Nationally, prices increased to a record high 216.1 cents per pound, up from 214.1 cents per pound in 2013, with stocks at 41.2 million pounds, up 8% from one year earlier.

MINNESOTA: Temperatures were above normal across the entire State of Minnesota during the month of March. Precipitation was below normal across most areas of the state during the same period. The U.S. Drought Monitor now indicates moderate drought conditions over the entire state.

One of the big expenses for commercial beekeepers travelling back from California to Minnesota this year has been trucking costs. Regardless of the commodity, trucking rates continue to be a major expense, and it is no different for commercial beekeepers across Minnesota. The weight of the hives is the determining factor on the number of hives that can be ultimately stacked per truck. Naturally, beekeepers want their bees to be healthy and fatter, but that is not always the case. It ends up being two-way streets on how many hives make it on a load. If the bees are fatter, fewer hives can be stacked on a load. If the bees are thinner, more hives can be stacked per load. In the case of the latter, the bees may not be at their peak. Thinner bees could also be an indication of other health or condition issues. Either way, the bottom line cost is going to be so much regardless of the number of hives on the load. One beekeeper stated that it cost him from \$5,500 to \$5,700 per load to transport his bees from the Central Valley of California to Central Minnesota with an average of between 448 to 480 hives per load. Most beekeepers lost some amount of bees from late fall to completion of the California almond pollination. Losses of around 10 to 18 percent of bees seem to be normal. However, an exception, was a report that some commercial beekeepers who travelled from Minnesota to California loss upward of 50 to 60 percent of their bees. Again, this was an exception and not the rule. It was explained that some of these heavier losses were a result of heavy mite load and/or viruses that were present in the fall prior to shipping to California, but were undetected before shipping to California for the almond pollination. This was a tragic scenario because these beekeepers lost out on revenue for the almond pollination and had the expense of transporting hives out and back to Minnesota with no revenue to show for the whole process.

For the commercial beekeepers that have returned from California, there will be an extreme amount of work to complete in late March and early April to prepare for the upcoming 2015 season in Minnesota. It appears that most beekeepers are not detecting very many mites at this time. However it is planned that a commercial application to control mites will be applied in early April prior to any honey flow. In addition beekeepers are planning to divide and re-queen any hives as necessary. Beekeepers have also been feeding bees as necessary mainly utilizing corn syrup. It is anticipated that new pollen may become available by the middle of April from pussy willows, box elder and oak trees in Minnesota. Certainly having natural pollen is a great way to kick start the hive and for feeding the new brood.

Wholesale demand for honey is very good and exceeds the current supply levels. According to beekeepers, no wholesale honey is left uncommitted at this time in Minnesota. Moving forward to the summer of 2015, beekeepers are hoping to receive at least \$2.00 per pound for their wholesale honey. One beekeeper stated that this will depend upon how well the 2015 domestic honey crop produces and the amount of imported honey that enters the United States. It is always hard to predict these variables at this time of year.

MISSISSIPPI: The beekeepers have reported that most of the bees are in good shape and are still being fed extra at this time until the weather improves and the bees can get out and begin to forage. Management of the hives for beetles and mites are ongoing to prevent any extra losses for this spring.

MONTANA: During March temperatures in Montana were very Spring-like, with average low temps in the upper 30s to mid 40s. Average highs during March ranged from the upper 50s to upper 70s. Precipitation was received across the state during the month. Topsoil moisture measurements at the end of March measured 7 percent very short, 61 percent adequate, and 10 percent surplus. Subsoil moisture measured 27 percent short and very short, while 73 percent of subsoil moisture measurements were adequate or surplus.

Beekeepers were busy with equipment repair and other home chores. With the mixture of warmer Spring days, some opportunities for bee activity and colony inspections of overwintering colonies were available in March. Early willows and dandelions were available natural sources of pollen or nectar. Many Montana colonies were at other locations, mostly California for the pollination of the nut, stone fruit, and blueberry crops. Pollination weather in California was stated to have been generally good. The health of the migratory colonies was mixed but generally in good shape. With the completion of the almond bloom, keepers were planning their moves up the coast into Oregon and Washington State for the tree fruit and early berry pollination seasons in those states. Honey demand was good.

NEW ENGLAND: Weather for the month of March offered some very cold temperatures which were lower than normal, exhibiting daytime temperatures in the teens and low 20's whereby freezing temperatures overnight combined with high winds creating a very low temperature wind chill effect. Precipitation fell in the form of heavy snow fall throughout all of New England as opposed to a wintery mix at times in southern New England. The resulting high moisture levels should provide conditions for abundant pollen and nectar sources. Early spring ornamentals such as pussy willow, hazelnut catkins, skunk cabbage, poison ivy, swamp red maple, winter aconite as well as snow drops (*galanthus nivalis*), snowflakes (*leucojum vernum*), are just waiting to begin to bloom. This year it looks like when the better weather comes, bees will be looking to work on silver maple, alders, willows and early garden bulbs. Just recently, bees have been returning to their hives, while spending a limited amount of time from cleansing and foraging flights. There is really nothing ready for bees to forage on now but very soon most keepers will have started feeding light sugar syrup, and light cane syrup to stimulate egg laying and to increase early populations as beekeepers look ahead to apple and fruit pollination in April/May.

March is a critical month for feeding. Current cold temperatures requires keepers to feed only solids such as protein patties, fondant, sugar candy, or dry granulated sugar around the opening of the inner cover. Keepers in Southern New England use 1:1 ratio sugar water and high fructose syrup in order to stimulate brood rearing with over winter hives. Seasoned keepers feed with caution because swarm control is a major tenet of successful beekeeping. Swarm prevention is helped along when, in the brood chambers, open space is provided for the queen by not over feeding thus over storing syrup. March losses are not uncommon because bees are aging and the colonies stores have dwindled.

As we finally have a break from winter, and warmer temperatures with light rain causing snow to melt, giving keepers the ability to inspect their hives. Early reports are encouraging, except in some deeply cold and traditionally high moisture areas, as we are hearing that many beekeepers have many strong colonies with a mix of weak ones, coming out of an excessively long, cold winter. Deep snow was a help as it provided insulation for hives. Some keepers, both hobbyists and commercial, have expressed a frustration about over wintering because purportedly, their bees going into winter were strong and had plenty of food but experienced losses as high as 45% after checking. Those hives that died were small in population going into winter and probably lacked the critical mass to maintain temperatures within the cluster. The second reason was starvation, especially in single colonies as they simply ran out of honey.

In New England, comprehensively, colonies reported losses were variable. In some cases, there were various reports of big losses and surprisingly a number of bee keepers indicating no losses. The individuals reporting no loss or little loss seemed to have fed bees and treated for mites. Additionally, an uncommon mite treatment is being used for varroa mite treatment in the form of – Apari Life Var--, which was created in France and has been used in Europe for the last 15 years. Most mite/disease treated apiaries, which had gone into over wintering strong, were still in reportedly good condition this spring, while weaker hives will require packages to build up their colonies. Most hive losses were likely due to a combination of varroa mites, nosema, small clusters within the hive, and neglected monitoring for supplemental feeding needs, hence many cases of starvation. The varroa mites took a bigger bite last year due to problems of treatment. Queen breeders and nuclei/ package producers have been busy taking orders in anticipation of an early spring demand. Nucleus hives tend to develop 5-6 weeks ahead of packages with much less supersedure problems due to population age imbalances before brood starts to hatch. Packages that lose queens can develop laying workers in a hurry.

This month is traditionally a time for bee association classes, as well as nuclei and package bee pick-ups to be scheduled.

Demand at all retail/wholesale outlets remains good and honey sales remain firm. Prices quoted for retail 1 lb. bottled units were \$9.00 to \$12.00 mostly \$12.00, occasionally higher, and 1 Quart bottled units were \$18.00 to \$20.00 mostly \$20.00, occasionally higher, inclusive of all varieties; for food service operations, prices were firm with 5 gallon units at \$195.00 to \$240.00 mostly \$230.00 and occasionally lower for all raw and natural honey depending on variety and quality. In the Northeast overall, the wholesale natural and raw honey price has been around \$2.50 to \$2.80 per pound, mostly \$2.80 per pound, occasionally higher, by the 55 gallon barrel. Propolis reportedly is \$14.00 to \$17.00 mostly \$16.00 for 2 ounces tincture and pollen is \$26.00 to \$30.00 mostly \$28.00 per quart.

NEW YORK: In Central New York, it has been a harsh winter – coldest on record for the Ithaca region. Temperatures did not rise above freezing during February. However, there were a few days during March that did allow bees a minimum cleansing flight, which helped the hives. Colony losses are expected to be high, with lots of packages and nucs needed for replacements. Spring is getting off to a slow start and the weather pattern will most likely continue into early summer. Remaining piles of snow will turn to mud in the Finger Lakes region, and slow access to yards. Tree buds are beginning to swell. Honey sales remain strong, and replacement bee costs are up. According to the annual Honey report released by National Agricultural Statistics Service, honey production in the state for 2014 was up 25% (3.3 million pounds) from one year earlier. This data is obtained from producers with five or more colonies; total colonies were 60,000, up by 9% from 2013. Yield per colony averaged 55 pounds, which was up 15% from 48 pounds in 2013. Honey stocks were also ahead by 47% to 1.52 million pounds on December 15, 2014. Honey prices increased to 272 cents per pound, up 28% from 212 cents per pound one year earlier.

NORTH CAROLINA: Temperatures in North Carolina varied throughout March, but were mostly normal to above normal. The state received mostly normal to below normal precipitation leaving statewide soil moisture levels rated at 1 percent short, 50.5 percent adequate, and 48.5 percent surplus. The North Carolina Drought Management Advisory Council reported 40 counties as being abnormally dry; with most of the reported counties being in the Mountain region of the State.

Winter losses were still being surveyed, but according to apiary inspectors overall colony health around the state appears to be fairly good for this time of year. Demand for bees exceeds supply as veteran beekeepers prepare to replace winter losses and the trend of new beekeepers entering the field continues. Commercial pollinators began moving hives back to North Carolina; primarily to the eastern part of the state for blueberry pollination, but a handful were also moved into local peach orchards.

Blackberry and Dandelion became available nectar sources in the Coastal Plains region; while Red Maple and Sugar Maple were available in the Piedmont and Mountain regions. It is anticipated that the rain and snow events experienced during the winter months will have filled groundwater reservoirs enough to enable a strong spring nectar flow and allow for bountiful foraging during April and May. Demand for honey is expected to remain high, especially throughout the spring allergy season. Prices are expected to remain at least steady until this year's harvest gets underway in late spring, early summer.

NORTH & SOUTH DAKOTA: At home growers had generally average temperatures and precipitation. The bees were busy with various commodities from the south to the Pacific Northwest. Early bloom in Washington and Oregon brought some early extra demand for bees to pollinate the fruit and other crops. Production in 2014 was up about 39% from 2013. Total crop value was up 38% despite the average price per pound off 1% at \$2.00

OHIO: Beekeepers in northern Ohio have reported a few cleansing flights during the month and supplemental feeding when necessary. Losses seem to have increased due to the cold winter with hobby beekeepers reporting from 50-60% losses, and await new packages and nucs. Currently maples, winter aconite and a few willows are beginning to bloom, providing early sources of pollen for bees. According to the annual Honey report released by NASS, Ohio's honey production totaled 915,000 pounds during 2014, with the average yield from 15,000 colonies (producers with 5 or more colonies) of 61 pounds per colony, a 35% jump from one year earlier. The price per pound averages 352 cents, up from 329 cents per pound in 2013. Ohio's stocks on hand December 15, 2014 totaled 256,000 pounds, a sharp decrease of 22% (390,000 pounds) from one year earlier. Total stocks for the US in 2014 were 41.1 million pounds, up 8% for the year. Total production increased 19% to 178.2 million pounds over the previous year (149.4 million pounds). According to Kim Flottum of Bee Culture magazine, the US per capita consumption of honey is estimated at 1.55 pounds per person, up from 1.40 pounds the previous year, and 1.20 pounds in 2010. The increase can be contributed to increasing imports used primarily by industrial manufacturers.

OKLAHOMA: The month of March saw spring like weather with early rains. Early swarming was seen early in the month. Heavy losses in several counties in Oklahoma some saw losses as high as 50% of the hives; mainly due to winter weather and starvation of the hives. Early spring conditions with lots of flowers in bloom from bulbs of canola, and various other wild flowers. Supplemental feeding is still needed in some areas. Supply is running low to out in most areas, but new supply will be here soon due to almond harvest coming in and the bees will return from California. Again, a lot of bee losses due to weather and unknown sources with whole hives with lots of honey on them but dead when you opened up head in the cells.

OREGON: No report issued.

SOUTH CAROLINA: No report issued.

TENNESSEE: No report issued.

TEXAS: Pollen sources received during March were from spring crops and wild flowers. Some beekeepers stopped feeding the bees in March. The bees were bringing in sufficient pollen that they no longer were eating the supplemental pollen patties. Most colonies were in good condition and few were in generally good to poor condition. Some hives suffered heavy losses due to the cold weather in March. Some beekeepers have switched hives back to screened bottom boards for the summer. This should increase ventilation and keep the hives cooler, even though the entrance reducers in place were left in place. Some found swarm cells, and split the colony by removing the queen and several frames (with adhering bees) to make a nucleus. New queens are on order for later in April, but until then the bees can raise their own queen. The goal for the next month is swarm prevention. Many hope to make several more splits when the new queens arrive, if the colonies are strong enough. Honey from last summer was reported to have starting to crystallize. Honey sales continue and demand is good.

WASHINGTON: The weather was mixed although still warmer than normal and little new snow fell in the mountains. Drought is still a concern in the fruit growing areas east of the Cascade Mountains. The bees were busy as the pollination season started 7-14 days ahead of normal in the Pacific Northwest. Early bloom in Washington brought early and extra demand for bees to pollinate the fruit and other crops as the period for pollination was compressed. Production in 2014 was up about 11% from 2013. Total crop value was up 20% and the average price per pound was up 7.8% at \$2.48.

WISCONSIN: According to some of the beekeepers, the temperatures for the month of March were spooky as if winter was never going to leave. Beekeepers reported a few days early within the month when temperatures got into the high 70s, but also dropped down into the lower 30s. This brought a lot of rain, wind, and even snow. However as temperatures began to level out during the middle and end of the month, beekeepers accessed their hives to check for durability. Although a few hives were lost during the winter months most beekeepers remain optimistic. Demand for honey is good at the retail level and fairly good at wholesale levels. Prices are generally unchanged.

U.S Exports of Honey By Country, Quantity, and Value

Year to Date		February 2015	
Quantity Kilograms	Value Dollars	Quantity Kilograms	Value Dollars

COMB & NATURAL HONEY PACKAGED FOR RETAIL SALE -

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Afghanistan	566	4,139	0	0
Bahamas, The	824	7,419	0	0
Barbados	6,682	18,327	5,785	12,987
Brazil	4,407	10,696	4,407	10,696
China	80,306	194,930	50,644	122,930
India	37,200	127,410	0	0
Japan	125,753	529,069	84,325	311,761
Korea, South	92,206	491,904	92,206	491,904
Kuwait	65,001	157,778	65,001	157,778
Netherlands Antilles(*)	2,693	16,022	1,796	10,682
Panama	7,094	26,705	6,196	21,364
Singapore	1,565	9,745	1,565	9,745
United Arab Emirates	1,750	6,074	0	0
Yemen(*)	9,936	28,288	9,936	28,288

**NATURAL HONEY, NOT ELSEWHERE
INDICATED OR SPECIFIED - - -**

Bahamas, The	5,548	25,086	2,863	9,612
Barbados	395	2,689	395	2,689
Bermuda	5,178	15,245	5,178	15,245
Canada	145,842	783,290	82,627	475,566
Chile	529	8,328	529	8,328
China	1,588	8,183	0	0
Dominican Republic	3,331	11,200	0	0
Guatemala	229	2,586	229	2,586
Hong Kong	1,483	3,600	0	0
India	109,440	306,564	90,660	251,340
Netherlands Antilles(*)	1,701	11,976	0	0
Philippines	486	3,511	0	0
Saudi Arabia	3,576	8,680	0	0
Singapore	3,265	22,608	0	0
United Arab Emirates	454	2,595	0	0
United Kingdom	147	2,590	147	2,590

GRAND TOTAL	719,175	2,847,237	504,489	194,6091
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U.S Imports of Honey By Country, Quantity, and Value

Year to Date			February 2015		
Quantity Kilograms	Value Dollars	CIF Value Dollars	Quantity Kilograms	Value Dollars	CIF Value Dollars

WHITE HONEY – NOT PACKAGED FOR RETAIL SALE - - -

Argentina	458,621	1,835,706	1,877,829	171,002	677,671	698,192
Brazil	314,006	1,359,643	1,391,748	20,125	82,820	83,041
Canada	2,150,785	9,363,671	9,407,141	1,460,899	6,237,207	6,262,756
Dominican Republic	4,632	12,800	13,669	0	0	0
India	17,700	55,224	56,224	17,700	55,224	56,224
Italy(*)	3,226	21,753	25,903	861	9,037	12,117
Mexico	128,530	539,468	542,175	75,462	309,441	311,642
New Zealand(*)	6,073	12,145	12,833	6,073	12,145	12,833
Serbia	1,416	9,183	9,755	0	0	0
Taiwan	56,361	118,426	129,790	19,910	37,055	41,180
Thailand	222,450	568,899	596,899	111,090	290,499	303,499
Ukraine	18,154	68,037	68,537	18,154	68,037	68,537
United Kingdom	988	6,315	7,230	688	2,905	3,013

EXTRA LIGHT AMBER HONEY – NOT PACKAGED FOR RETAIL SALE - - -

Argentina	1,811,315	7,450,979	7,704,608	825,953	3,391,309	3,522,602
Brazil	188,296	736,545	765,276	150,696	581,529	605,395
Canada	66,042	334,765	335,646	38,102	180,345	180,645
Denmark(*)	1,682	12,294	12,933	1,682	12,294	12,933
France(*)	244	2,494	2,544	244	2,494	2,544
India	1,129,340	3,336,694	3,512,234	680,840	1,968,067	2,064,775
Italy(*)	82	3,870	3,973	82	3,870	3,973
Mexico	340,844	1,396,020	1,404,268	183,165	744,297	749,397
New Zealand(*)	10,038	17,703	19,872	10,038	17,703	19,872
Taiwan	133,980	342,415	359,915	38,280	98,380	105,380
Thailand	347,700	956,907	977,999	164,700	457,683	465,911
Ukraine	1,450,329	4,644,747	4,825,851	364,466	1,193,464	1,248,964

LIGHT AMBER HONEY – NOT PACKAGED FOR RETAIL SALE –

Argentina	474,484	1,989,031	2,071,070	189,903	786,303	822,163
Australia(*)	653	8,379	8,622	0	0	0
Austria	15,539	103,351	109,240	8,791	80,383	84,962
Brazil	380,508	1,419,837	1,455,897	304,764	1,128,356	1,159,511
Bulgaria	8,858	32,826	35,326	0	0	0
Burma	478,200	1,185,878	1,253,462	181,800	450,308	478,702
Cote d'Ivoire	38,400	110,016	110,017	0	0	0
Denmark(*)	3,688	26,208	27,569	3,688	26,208	27,569
Dominican Republic	99,973	292,508	308,682	2,790	8,000	9,250
Germany(*)	34,164	179,427	188,877	24,660	126,524	132,724
Greece	2,074	5,841	6,418	0	0	0
India	976,080	2,949,610	3,079,710	285,900	816,898	838,145
Israel(*)	1,363	8,225	8,493	0	0	0
Italy(*)	1,936	33,135	34,395	911	14,231	15,167
Mexico	24,806	88,124	90,733	0	0	0
Pakistan	3,420	12,882	14,170	0	0	0
Spain	3,996	33,458	34,246	3,196	25,268	25,928
Taiwan	287,100	667,793	701,493	114,840	269,299	278,399
Thailand	906,340	2,290,752	2,403,662	350,385	864,276	906,846
Turkey	820,260	2,073,900	2,288,902	558,000	1,339,200	1,479,202
Ukraine	114,960	369,449	390,439	57,480	181,311	192,796
Uruguay	36,580	127,298	128,262	36,580	127,298	128,262
Vietnam	4,495,440	12,487,843	13,117,751	2,247,000	6,348,108	6,657,128

NOT OTHERWISE SPECIFIED OR INDICATED ---

Canada	1,991	19,288	19,403	1,991	19,288	19,403
Dominican Republic	64,186	183,152	189,330	44,986	128,048	132,626
Egypt	576	2,400	2,513	0	0	0
Greece	1,929	14,264	15,846	0	0	0
India	12,690	48,579	51,379	0	0	0
Indonesia	121,800	328,860	343,860	81,200	219,240	229,240
Italy(*)	2,086	32,535	33,403	1,756	28,565	29,165
Mexico	13,714	45,043	46,150	9,730	38,610	39,610
Moldova	3,535	6,315	7,354	3,535	6,315	7,354
New Zealand(*)	207,648	1,674,940	1,698,331	141,789	711,754	725,430
Poland	3,123	22,135	23,721	0	0	0
Russia	18,730	80,449	84,375	18,730	80,449	84,375
Spain	233	2,565	2,605	233	2,565	2,605
Taiwan	43,456	113,539	118,673	42,880	111,488	116,488
Turkey	460	3,600	7,100	0	0	0
Ukraine	2,975	11,190	13,190	0	0	0
Vietnam	736,509	1,955,864	2,048,595	133,950	380,385	397,040

COMB AND RETAIL HONEY

Austria	378	4,131	4,565	0	0	0
Brazil	2,693	20,097	20,197	2,693	20,097	20,197
Bulgaria	21,837	85,366	89,690	21,837	85,366	89,690
Canada	15,605	130,543	130,794	0	0	0
Egypt	3,999	9,734	10,054	0	0	0
France(*)	66,987	278,473	292,010	46,649	173,598	181,430
Germany(*)	12,540	75,033	77,533	0	0	0
Greece	1,675	20,106	21,311	750	7,838	8,131
Guatemala	1,000	3,700	4,154	1,000	3,700	4,154
Hungary	6,680	49,275	52,076	6,680	49,275	52,076
India	120,060	371,496	386,496	120,060	371,496	386,496
Italy(*)	583	7,251	7,370	0	0	0
Lithuania	3,072	13,646	15,011	0	0	0
Mexico	2,175	12,528	12,728	0	0	0
New Zealand(*)	166,244	1,129,128	1,142,079	5,917	35,204	37,324
Poland	6,873	31,304	32,888	0	0	0
Portugal	1,230	7,208	7,448	0	0	0
Russia	5,587	27,132	29,837	480	2,039	2,235
Saudi Arabia	790	6,517	6,606	0	0	0
Serbia	3,942	29,490	30,756	3,942	29,490	30,756
Spain	22,630	177,820	184,809	2,875	19,130	20,694
Taiwan	4,504	31,879	32,925	3,854	28,984	29,926
Turkey	11,913	79,211	81,429	0	0	0
Ukraine	19,430	58,290	61,790	19,430	58,290	61,790

FLAVORED HONEY –

Belgium-Luxembourg(*)	1,040	3,186	3,389	0	0	0
Canada	140	3,520	3,524	140	3,520	3,524
China	11,209	59,523	61,076	5,584	31,079	31,768
India	20,855	47,850	49,650	0	0	0
Ireland	203	2,325	2,569	0	0	0
Italy(*)	420	12,115	12,502	0	0	0
Japan	180	22,877	22,977	0	0	0
Korea, South	43,552	760,086	777,854	14,623	253,469	260,598
Lebanon	240	3,600	3,744	240	3,600	3,744
Mexico	11,811	91,037	92,335	2,450	8,937	9,267
New Zealand(*)	31	4,587	4,685	0	0	0
Russia	2,600	4,542	4,996	0	0	0
Taiwan	1,350	2,613	2,789	1,350	2,613	2,789

ORGANIC HONEY –

Argentina	10,745	76,342	78,241	10,745	76,342	78,241
Brazil	1,449,777	5,927,555	6,153,918	528,324	2,124,769	2,205,206
Canada	11,112	89,858	91,592	5,934	46,828	47,540
Greece	384	5,284	5,406	0	0	0
Italy(*)	3,027	41,933	42,877	1,833	23,970	24,528
Mexico	1,923	8,429	8,523	972	5,357	5,360
New Zealand(*)	8,887	131,072	134,572	8,887	131,072	134,572

GRAND TOTAL

21,389,210 74,204,884 76,929,891 10,028,929 34,348,217 35,587,551

Notes:

1. Data Source: Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, Foreign Trade Statistics

2. All zeroes for a data item may show that statistics exist in the other import type. Consumption or General.
3. (*) denotes a country that is a summarization of its component countries.
4. Users should use cautious interpretation on QUANTITY reports using mixed units of measure. QUANTITY line items will only include statistics on the units of measure that are equal to, or are able to be converted to, the assigned unit of measure of the grouped commodities.
5. The CIF Value is not included within the 13th month data loads. This means that the CIF Value will be zero (0) for any records that are inserted during this process.
6. Product Group : Harmonized