

**Voluntary Report** – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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**Report Name:** Canadian Bee Industry Receives Government Support to Recover from 2022 Honey Bee Losses

**Country:** Canada

**Post:** Ottawa

**Report Category:** Agriculture in the News, Climate Change/Global Warming/Food Security

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**Report Highlights:**

Following significant honey bee colony losses in 2022, a number of provinces and the Government of Canada have announced funding availability to beekeepers, through the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Program to offset costs of losses and replacements. Honey bee losses, along with limited availability of and high costs of replacements, resulted in adverse impacts to pollination, and consequently yield, for a number of commodities in 2022. Canada opened access for imports of packaged bees from Ukraine and Italy in Spring 2023.

The Government of Canada, in collaboration with certain provincial government partners, announced industry support opportunities for beekeepers following the significant colony losses experienced over winter 2021/2022. Canada total honey bee colony losses reported in Spring 2022 were 45.5 percent of 2021 colony counts. Ineffective *Varroa* control was the most cited possibility for winter losses by beekeepers, although there was variation across provinces with causes cited ranging from disease, weather, colony vigor, and unknown causes. The provinces of Manitoba and PEI reported the highest losses with over 50 percent of colonies lost; 57.2 percent of colonies and 51.9 percent of colonies, respectively. Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec also reported losses close to 50 percent while losses in the Maritime provinces, with the exception of PEI, were the lowest in the country.

Beekeepers were challenged to recover from these losses. There were reported issues sourcing replacement colonies as well as high replacement costs. As a result, pollinator availability for the 2022 season was diminished. The blueberry industry was notable in citing that their production was negatively impacted by suboptimal availability of hives per acre, which resulted in reduced yields. Estimated colonies lost over winter 2021/2022 were 372,521, while total operational honey bee colonies dropped from 817,926 in 2021 to 764,905 in 2022. In order to help beekeepers offset the additional costs from 2022 losses, and to rebuild colony numbers moving forward, the Government of Canada announced several funding opportunities for beekeepers in June 2023. Under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Program and in collaboration with Ontario, Manitoba, and Alberta provincial governments the following funding has been announced:

- In [Ontario](#), up to CAD 5 million is available for commercial beekeepers to offset 2022 losses.
- In [Manitoba](#), CAD 7.5 million to commercial beekeepers to offset costs of purchasing replacement hives.
- In [Alberta](#), commercial beekeepers will be eligible to receive compensation in the amount of CAD 210 per colony, CAD 140 per package, and/or CAD 35 per queen on replacements purchased between Spring 2022 and May 1, 2023.

### **Source Countries for Honey Bees**

Ability to source packaged honey bees internationally has been relatively limited for Canadian beekeepers. Canada restricted access for package bees to the source countries of Australia, New Zealand, and Chile until Ukraine and Italy gained access in early 2023. During 2020 and 2021, Canadian industry struggled to source packaged bees as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Typically, packaged bees would come from the aforementioned source countries on airplanes but with pandemic impacts severely limiting flights globally, there were limited transport options to bring packaged bees from overseas. Over the past five years, Australia has been the main source country for packaged bees by volume, however, year-to-date trade data (January to May 2023) shows imports from Australia 60 percent lower than 2022 (Figure 1); Australia experienced an outbreak of *Varroa destructor* in 2022 and

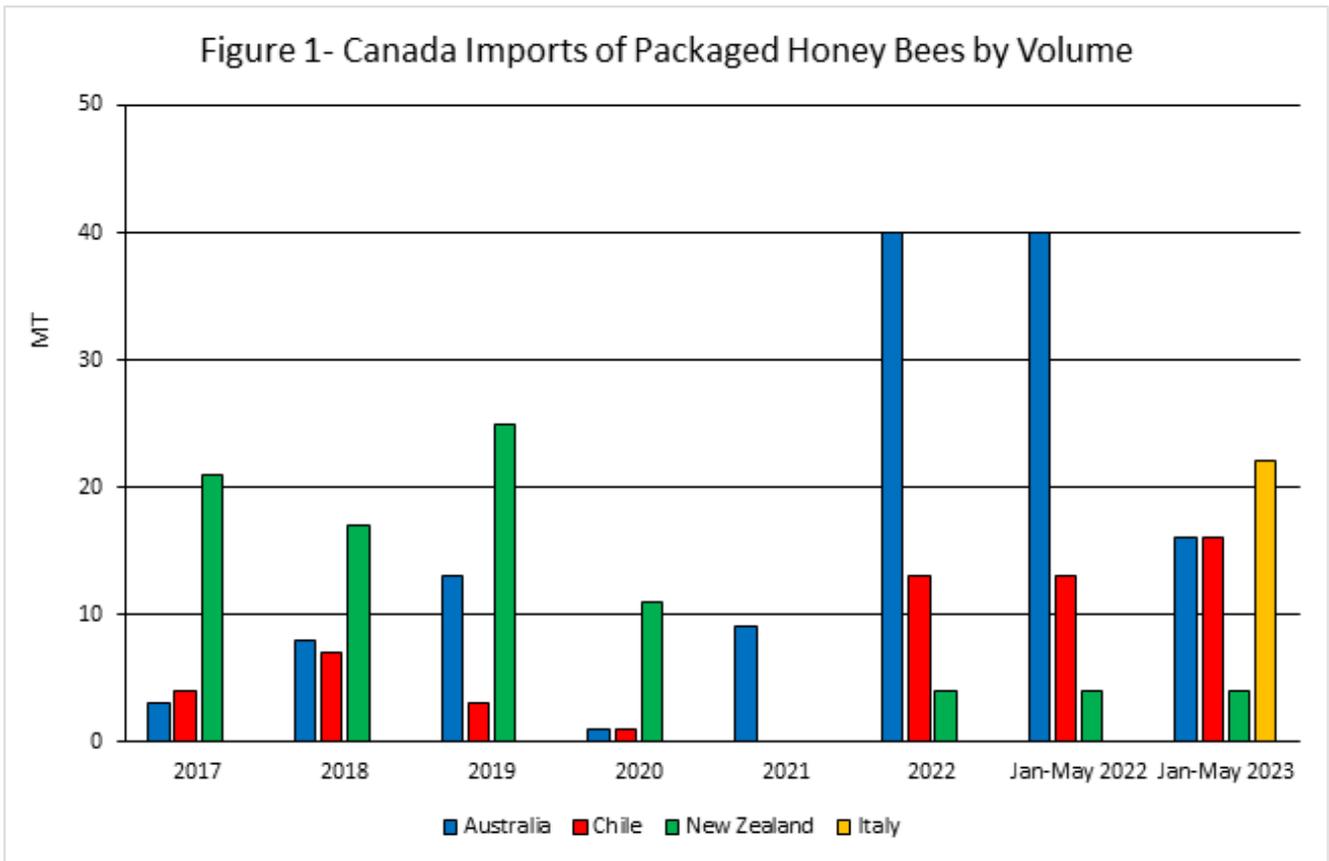
has imposed mitigation measures domestically and from trade partners as a result. Italy is currently the top source market by volume for Canadian imports of packaged bees.

The United States currently has export access for honey bee queens only. Industry groups on both sides of the border have been calling for Canada to re-evaluate its risk assessment for U.S. packaged bees, the most recent risk assessment being a decade old. In response, CFIA has been consulting with Canadian stakeholders. In July 2023, the CFIA provided industry stakeholders with a notice that they will conduct a new risk assessment evaluating risks associated with importing honey bee packages from the United States. CFIA has stated that this risk assessment will be based on World Organization of Animal Health (WOAH) guidelines and is expected to be completed in early 2024. They have requested submissions of any new scientific information concerning health and/or disease/pest control programs relevant to honey bee populations in both Canada and the United States.

### **2023 Losses**

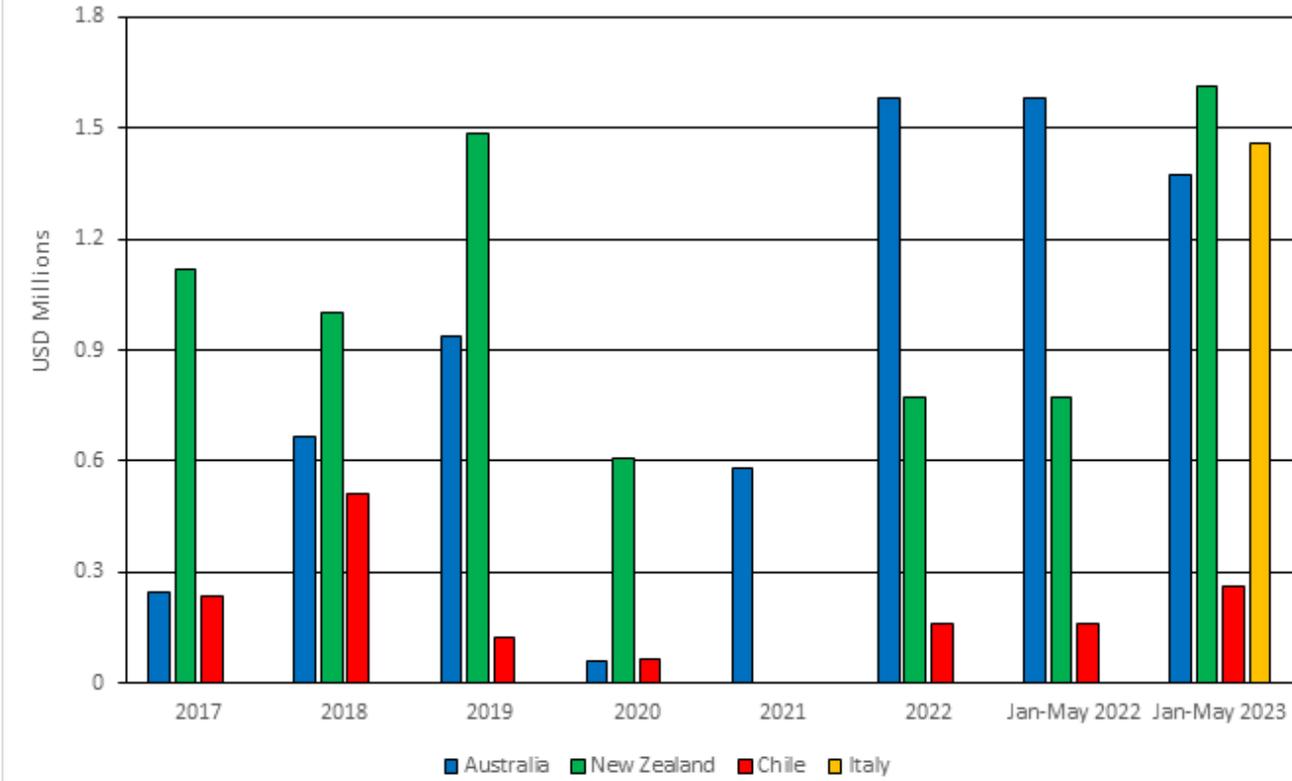
Preliminary loss estimates for winter 2022/2023 suggest that colony losses have reduced to 32.8 percent. Although losses are reduced compared to 2022, Canadian beekeepers will still need to import replacement packages and will be continuing to rebuild following winter 2021/2022 losses. Industry groups estimate it could take to 2025 to rebuild colonies in certain regions based on the current scenario of approved source countries and availability to acquire replacements. In 2023, Alberta and PEI experienced the highest losses, estimated at 39.1 and 46.7 percent, respectively. Total number of colonies lost during winter 2021/2022 were estimated at 372,521 while winter 2022/2023 colonies lost are estimated at 250,956. The [Canadian Association of Professional Apiculturists](#) (CAPA) will issue a final report on over winter losses later in 2023. This report will include additional details on beekeeper perceptions for mortality causes, as well as select disease and pest management mitigation activities employed by beekeepers.

**Appendix- Trade Data: Canada Imports of Packaged Honey Bees**



Source: Trade Data Monitor, LLC. HS Code 0106410010.

Figure 2- Canada Imports of Packaged Honey Bees by Value



Source: Trade Data Monitor, LLC. HS Code 0106410010.

**Attachments:**

No Attachments.