



B-PLUS

BEEKEEPING REPORT FROM MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

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Back Issues of *B-Plus* on the Web

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of 1995-96 will be long remembered.

If we thought that the winter losses of 1993-94 were bad, this past winter almost makes us wish we could have that one back. My estimate of the total loss of colonies in Michigan will be about 80%. We had a figure of 62% at the ANR Week meeting the first week of March and many colonies were lost after that. There are some estimates that are closer to 90% loss! And some of the 10% that were left were none too strong.

With the loss of colonies came the problem of finding replacement packages, nucs and queens. In addition the problem of finding enough colonies to pollinate the early season fruit crops was a major problem. The final fruit set for

the various crops will be an interesting statistic this year. The apple pollination season at my house was over in a matter of a few hours. This was true for king blossom for most of the varieties. The very warm weather pushed the blossoms through their cycle so fast I seriously doubt that the Lonesome Hive could even hope to keep up. The pollination season looks a little slower (more favorable) for the NW part of the state so maybe the fruit industry will survive a disastrous season even though the bees were hard pressed to give the best in pollination service.

The good news for the pollinators is that the price of the service is up. Most contracts that I have heard about were in the \$35-40 range, and it looks like cucumbers will be close to \$50 for a colony. The increase in the price of honey is certainly reflected in the rental fee.

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