

INDUSTRY SUMMARY · 2026

Beekeeping in Ontario

2025 INDUSTRY FIGURES

5,195
registered beekeepers, 31.8% of Canada

118,109
colonies, 13.8% of Canada

3,560 t
honey produced, 9.3% of Canada

$40.8M
honey production value, 16.9% of Canada

Who supports Ontario beekeepers

Ontario Beekeepers' Association
founded 1881

Its Tech-Transfer Program runs research, courses and the Ontario Resistant Honey Bee Selection Program.

Local associations
32 listed by the OBA

From Essex to Thunder Bay and Ottawa; the Central Ontario association dates from 1910.

Honey Bee Research Centre
University of Guelph, since 1894

Now the Luckevich Pinchin Honey Bee Research Centre: 326 hives, courses and research; opened June 2026.

Provincial Apiarist (OMAFA)
Bees Act

Registration is free and compulsory. Inspectors visited 589 bee yards in 2025.

Pollination

Managed honey bees and bumble bees generate about $897 million of Ontario's roughly $6.7 billion in annual crop sales, about 13%, by the province's estimate. About 35,000 Ontario colonies went east in 2021 to pollinate blueberries and cranberries in eastern Canada.

What's happening

- **Hobby beekeeping is booming.** Registered beekeepers rose from 4,095 to 5,195 in one year; only 254 are commercial.
- **Heavy winter losses.** CAPA's preliminary 2025-26 figure is 53%, among the highest in Canada; the OBA's survey of 503 beekeepers found 39.5%.
- **More brood disease.** EFB rose from 0.16% to 0.66% of inspected colonies in 2025; AFB broke out in the Waterloo region.

The Bees Act

- **An apiary permit is needed to sell or give away bees or used equipment**, or to bring them in from another province. Colonies, nucs and used equipment from outside Canada are barred.
- **Report American or European foulbrood, small hive beetle or high varroa to an apiary inspector immediately.** OMAFA advises treating varroa above 2% in May and above 3% in August.
- **Hives must have movable frames** and sit at least 30 m from a dwelling or public-use property and 10 m from a highway. Antibiotics for bees need a veterinary prescription.


A load of colonies ready to move


Wrapped for winter


Pollen traps

Honey production averages about 30 kg per colony in Ontario, compared with 45 kg nationally.

Hive losses, winter 2024-25

Ontario **37%**

Canada **39%**

Hive losses, winter 2025-26 (preliminary)

Ontario **53%**

Canada **34%**

Losses were about 18% in 2020-21; the industry considers 15% sustainable.

GET INVOLVED

Nov 26-28, 2026
OBA Annual Meeting and Conference, near Barrie

Each spring
Introductory beekeeping courses at the Honey Bee Research Centre, Guelph

ontariobee.com · hbrc.ca

Sources: AAFC, Statistical overview of the Canadian honey and bee industry, 2025 (industry figures) · OMAFA, 2025 Provincial Apiarist report and Ontario beekeeper registration (registration, inspections, disease) · Ontario Beekeepers' Association, including its local associations list and Spring Survey Report 2026 · Luckevich Pinchin Honey Bee Research Centre · CAPA final report 2025 and preliminary report 2026 (hive losses) · Ontario, Pollinator health (pollination value) · OMAFA, 2021 Provincial Apiarist report (colonies shipped east, 2020-21 losses, varroa thresholds) · Summary of Ontario beekeeping regulations, Selling honey bees and Importing honey bees into Ontario (Bees Act rules) · Ontario Pollinator Health Action Plan (2016) (15% sustainable loss). Honey per colony calculated from AAFC tables. Photos: supplied by an Ontario beekeeper.

Prepared by the Canadian Beekeepers Federation · canadianbeekeepers.ca