How Doth the Busy Little Bee!

By

H. L. Walster, Director

“How doth the busy little bee improve each shining hour”? The answer to that question is reported by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics of the U. S. Department of Agriculture in a press release issued by Ovide E. Grenier, Agricultural Statistician and C. J. Heltemes, Agricultural Statistician in Charge, Fargo Office on February 5, 1947.

These industrious inquirers and collectors of useful agricultural information have not counted the bees but they have estimated the number of colonies of bees for the last six years; the production per colony, the total honey production, and yes, even the beeswax production. I have no doubt that their figures for honey production are to be regarded as sincere figures, that is “without wax.” Under the word “sincere” Funk and Wagnall’s dictionary quotes Trench (1888) “On the Study of Words” as follows: “Words out of number, which are now employed only in a figurative sense did yet originally rest on some fact of the outward world.” “‘Sincere’ is without wax (sine cera) as the best and finest honey should be.”

How many colonies of bees? The colony count has been going up for the United States but has stood at a rather even figure for North Dakota—witness these figures:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Colonies of Bees in N. D.</th>
<th>Colonies of Bees in U. S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>21,000</td>
<td>4,477,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>24,000</td>
<td>4,893,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>21,000</td>
<td>4,887,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>22,000</td>
<td>5,217,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>22,000</td>
<td>5,490,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>23,000</td>
<td>5,787,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How much honey per colony? Here is where the busy little North Dakota bee doth really improve each shining minute for our average production per colony is greatly above the U. S. average and here is the proof:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Honey per North Dakota Colony Pounds</th>
<th>Honey per U. S. Colony Pounds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>49.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>36.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>38.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>38.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>42.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>36.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only once in the last six years have North Dakota bees fallen to the national average, that is in 1944 when the average for all states except Nebraska was low.
How much honey production?

Thousands of Pounds of Honey
Year North Dakota United States
1941 2,079 222,959
1942 2,112 177,672
1943 1,365 189,867
1944 792 188,917
1945 2,640 233,070
1946 2,070 213,014

1941-45)

How much beeswax?

Thousands of Pounds of Beeswax—By-product of Honey Production
Year North Dakota United States
1941 24 3,495
1942 30 3,344
1943 18 3,743
1944 16 3,921
1945 50 4,543
1946 27 4,381

The honey production per North Dakota colony in 1946 was 90 pounds, compared with a five
year average (1941-45) of 81 pounds. That 90 pound average production put North Dakota in
third place, first place being occupied by Nebraska with 103 pounds per colony and second
place by Utah with 100 pounds per colony. Besides producing its 90 pounds the average North
Dakota colony left to winter over had 45 pounds of honey stored for winter feeding.

This B. A. E. report states the North Dakota honey producer sold his 1946 crop of extracted
honey at an average 25 cents per pound wholesale and 27 cents per pound retail. Comparable
U. S. figure for wholesale was 20.9 cents per pound and for retail 26.1 cents per pound.

Condition of Ranges and Condition of Sheep and Cattle

The March 1, 1947 Range and Livestock Report of the Federal
Agricultural Statistician, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S.-
D.A., Fargo, tells the story of the conditions of the range and of
range cattle and sheep as of March 1, 1947 and furnishes comparisons
with previous periods. A condition of 49 or below is considered Very
Bad; 50-59, Bad; 60-69, Poor; 70-79, Fair; 80-89, Good; 90-99 Very
Good; and 100 or over Excellent or Unusual.

Here then is the story our ranges and range livestock are telling
us this spring:

Ranges
March, 1947 ........................................... 74 (Fair)
February, 1947 ........................................ 74 (Fair)
March, 1946 ........................................... 71 (Fair)
20-Yr. Ave., 1923-1942 .............................. 71 (Fair)

Cattle
March, 1947 ........................................... 82 (Good)
February, 1947 ........................................ 83 (Good)
March, 1946 ........................................... 83 (Good)
20-Yr. Ave., 1923-1942 .............................. 82 (Good)

Sheep
March, 1947 ........................................... 84 (Good)
February, 1947 ........................................ 84 (Good)
March, 1946 ........................................... 83 (Good)
20-Yr. Ave., 1923-1942 .............................. 84 (Good)

Ave. 17
North Dakota Western States
Ranges
March, 1947 ........................................... 74 (Fair)
February, 1947 ........................................ 74 (Fair)
March, 1946 ........................................... 71 (Fair)
20-Yr. Ave., 1923-1942 .............................. 71 (Fair)

Cattle
March, 1947 ........................................... 82 (Good)
February, 1947 ........................................ 83 (Good)
March, 1946 ........................................... 83 (Good)
20-Yr. Ave., 1923-1942 .............................. 82 (Good)

Sheep
March, 1947 ........................................... 84 (Good)
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