

How Doth the Busy Little Bee!

By
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"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:

Year	Colonies of Bees in N. D.	Colonies of Bees in U. S.
1941	21,000	4,477,000
1942	24,000	4,893,000
1943	21,000	4,887,000
1944	22,000	5,217,000
1945	22,000	5,460,000
1946	23,000	5,787,000

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:

Year	Honey per North Dakota Colony Pounds	Honey per U. S. Colony Pounds
1941	99	49.6
1942	88	36.3
1943	65	38.9
1944	36	36.2
1945	120	42.7
1946	90	36.9

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	213,814

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	North Dakota	Ave. 17
		Western States
March, 1947	74 (Fair)	77 (Fair)
February, 1947	74 (Fair)	77 (Fair)
March, 1946	71 (Fair)	78 (Fair)
20-Yr. Ave., 1923-1942	71 (Fair)	79 (Fair)
Cattle		
March, 1947	82 (Good)	81 (Good)
February, 1947	83 (Good)	82 (Good)
March, 1946	83 (Good)	82 (Good)
20-Yr. Ave., 1923-1942	82 (Good)	84 (Good)
Sheep		
March, 1947	84 (Good)	82 (Good)
February, 1947	84 (Good)	83 (Good)
March, 1946	83 (Good)	84 (Good)
20-Yr. Ave., 1923-1942	84 (Good)	87 (Good)