

2019 Alberta Beekeepers Survey

A survey regarding; 1. the challenges due to weather of the 2019 crop year, and 2. CFIA inspections with the new SFCRs in place was emailed to all Eligible Producers belonging to the Alberta Beekeepers Commission in late August/early September 2019. Sixty-six or 37% of all Eligible Producers responded. The results are summarized below.

What we Learned

From this survey we can conclude a few things in respect to the 2019 beekeeping season:

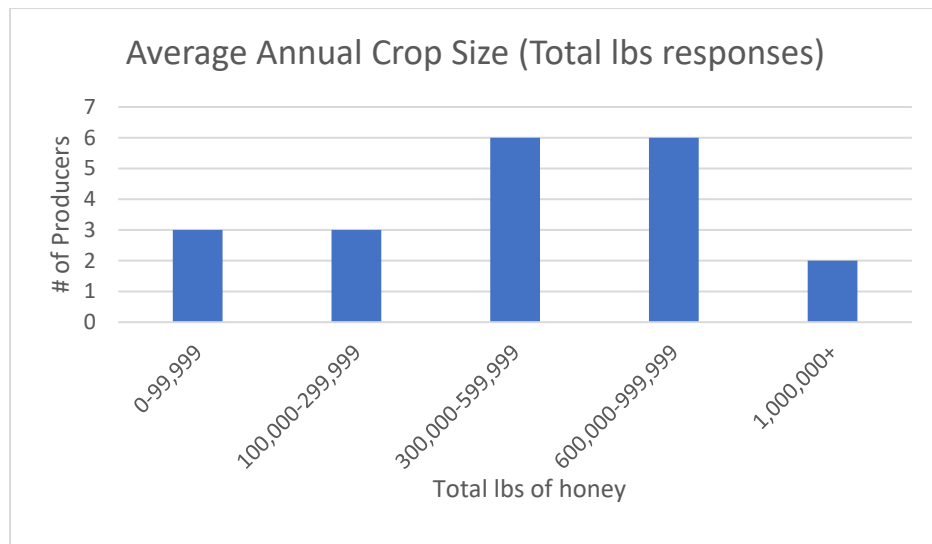
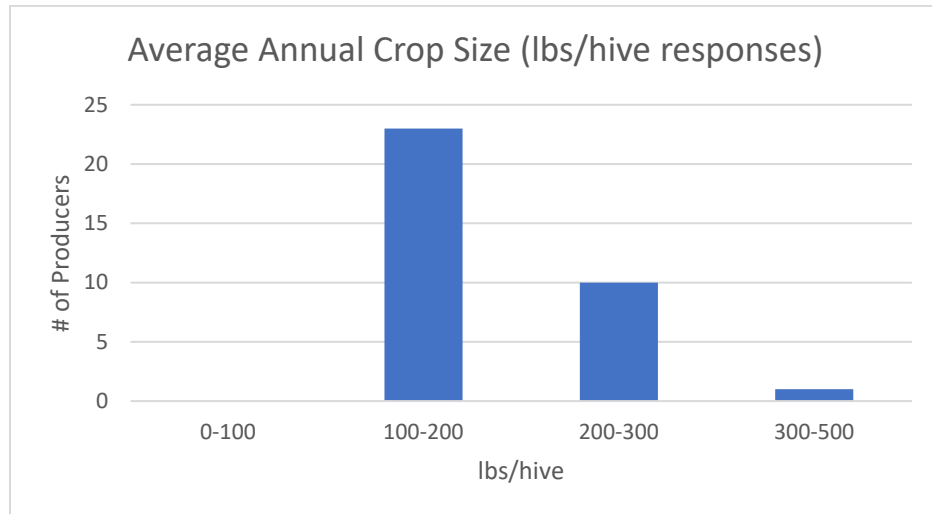
1. First, the responses in this survey showed that the majority (66%) of respondents have purchased production insurance in the past. Mainly, these producers have had experiences with either Agri-Stability (45%), Crop Insurance (39%), or both.
2. This survey has also outlined that that only 21% of respondents have production insurance, while 44% have AgriStability for the 2019 season. Based on the comments made by survey respondents, we were able to conclude that honey producers in the province do not believe the insurance programs available to them are worth the premiums, or that they have had a poor experience with the programs in the past.
3. Questions 6 and 7 show us it has been a poor year for the beekeeping industry. One hundred percent of respondents claim that their 2019 honey crop will be below their 3-year production average. Not only this, but 87% of the producers who responded to the survey have experienced crop losses of at least 30%, while 44% of those that responded have crops losses of 50% or greater.

The survey has also provided insight into CFIA inspections done on honey farms.

4. Seventy percent of the respondents have been inspected by CFIA during the 2019 season.
5. The majority of the respondents seemed to have had a decent experience with inspections, however some common complaints and criticisms did arise. The main complaint about the inspection or the regulations is that they are far too excessive. Many producers have expressed that they feel there are too many pointless requirements/rules/paperwork procedures that not only add more work for the producer, but also are irrelevant to the safety of the honey. The respondents have shown that they do not mind protocols for which they see as appropriate, but many pointed out how some regulations are too much for a primary producer of honey and feel that these regulations are more suited for a packer/processor. Some respondents also feel that the inspectors themselves lack knowledge regarding bees, honey production, honey value chains, and the honey/beekeeping industry in general.

Question 1: What is your annual average crop size?

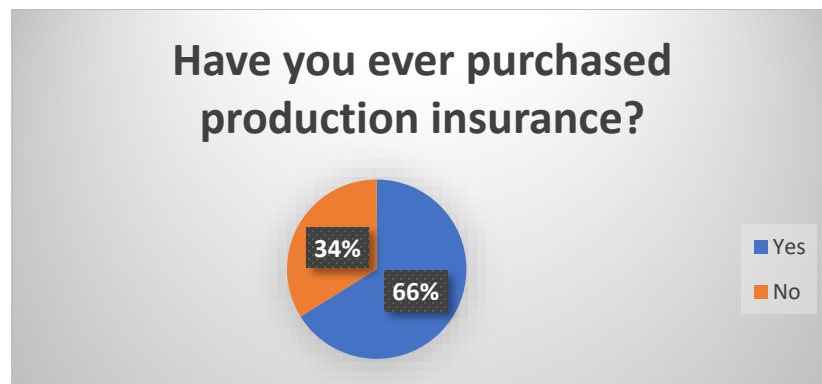
This question received 2 types of responses, lbs/hive and total lbs.



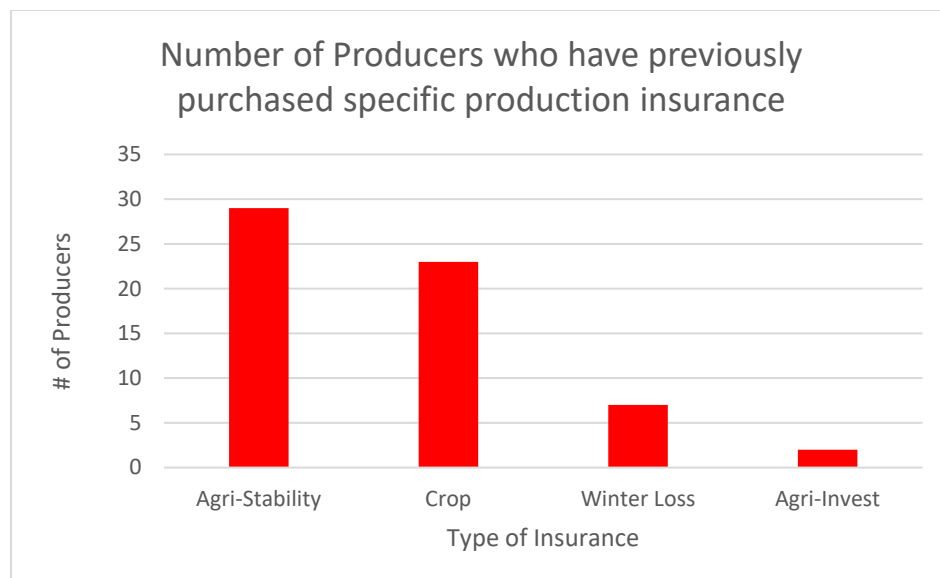
*Note: overall production, in hindsight, perhaps is not relevant to the intent of the survey. Regardless this question should have been more specific as to how to report production numbers.

Question 2: Have you ever purchased production Insurance?

41 Beekeepers responded saying they have previously purchased production insurance. 21 or 34% Beekeepers responded stating that they have not previously purchased production insurance.

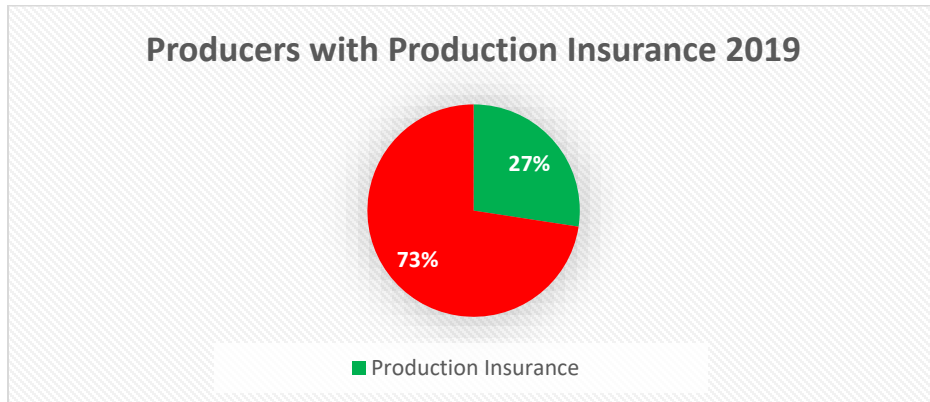
**Question 3: If you answered yes to the previous question, please tell us what type of crop insurance you have purchased. e.g.; winter loss, crop insurance, AgriStability**

Of the 42 producers who have previously held production insurance, the majority of them have purchased either Agri-Stability, Crop Insurance, or both. 16 Producers have previously purchased more than one the programs.

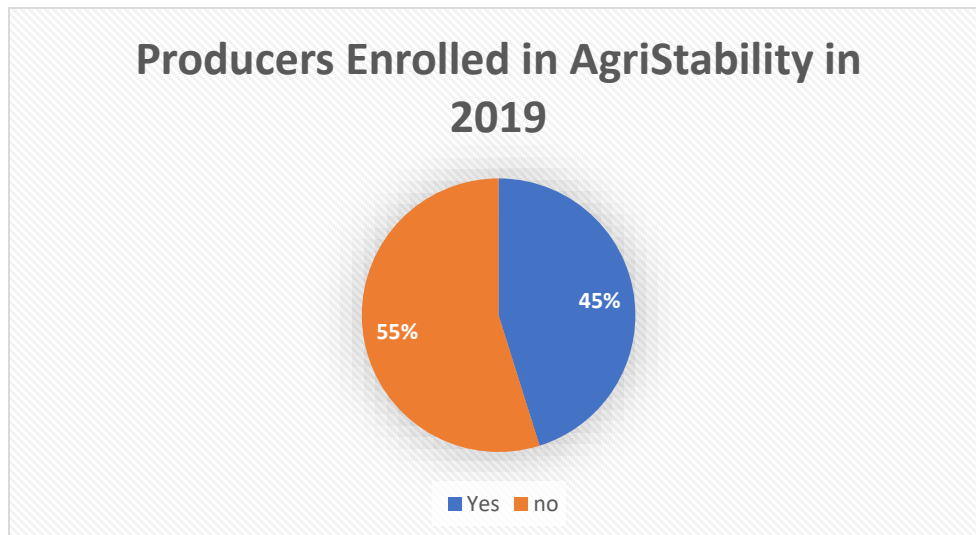


Question 4: Do you have production insurance of any kind for the 2019 crop year?

45 producers or 73% responded stating they do not have production insurance for the current crop year. Only 17 producers responded stating they do have production insurance for the current crop year. This highlights the producer's experience with production insurance. As question 2 shows, 66% of the respondents have held insurance in the past, yet only 27% currently have production insurance. Clearly many producers do not think the production insurance programs in place are worth it.

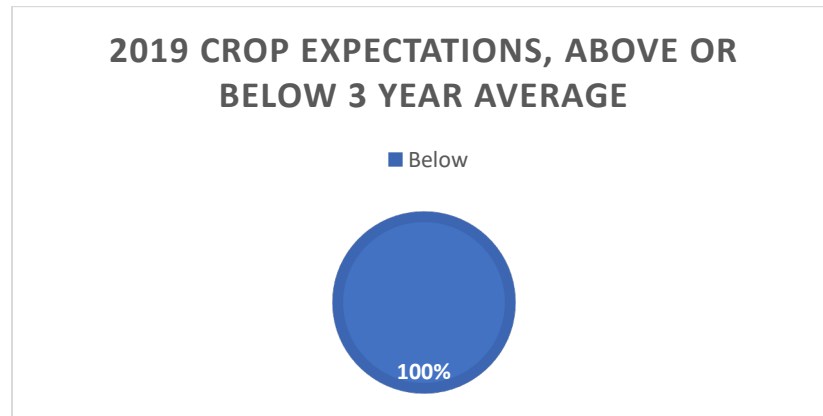
**Question 5: Are you enrolled in AgriStability for the 2019 crop year?**

28 or 45% of the survey Respondents are currently enrolled in Agri-Stability for the 2019 crop year. 34 Respondents are not. Producers enrolled in Agri-Stability are eligible to receive a program payment if their production margin falls below 70% of their reference margin.



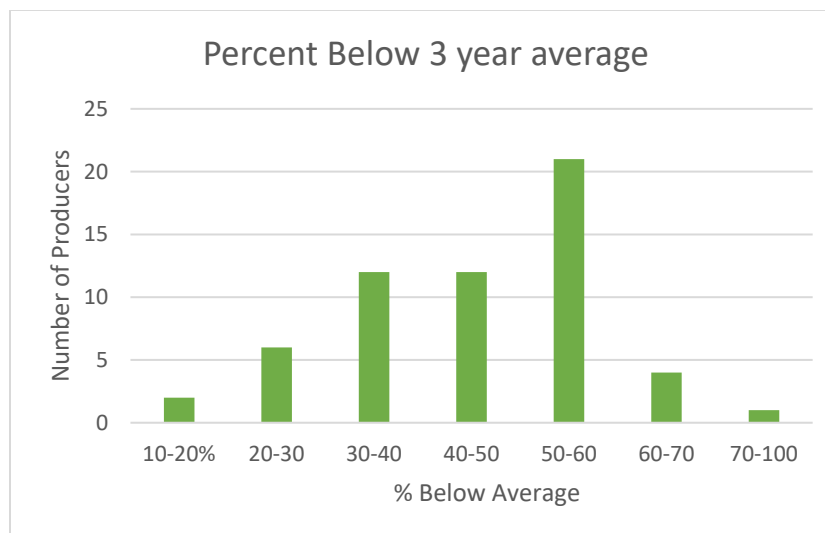
Question 6: For the 2019 crop year, are you expecting your crop to be above or below your 3 year average?

66 Survey Respondents (100%) responded stating they are expecting their 2019 honey crop to be below their 3 year average. This highlights the terrible crop season experienced by beekeepers in the province.



Question 7: If you answered below, how much below your last 3 years average is your crop? (%)

Majority of the respondents, or 44% have stated that their current crop is at least 50% lower than their 3 year average. Beekeepers in Alberta are experiencing losses of the majority of their crop.

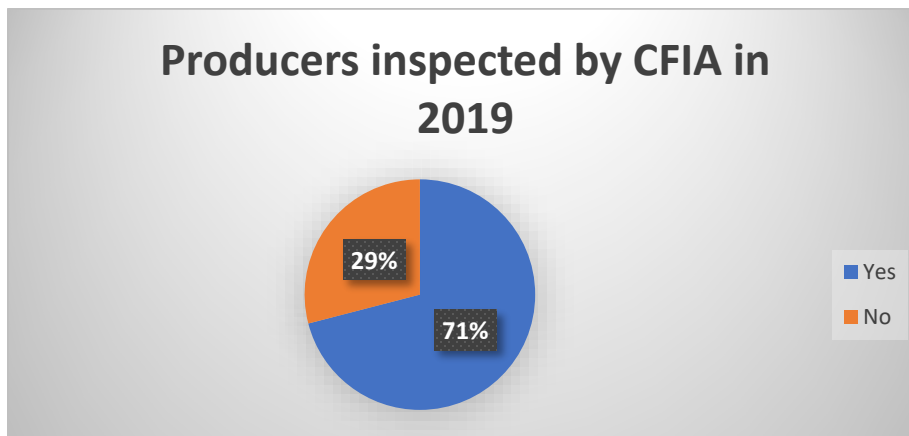


Question 8: If you answered above, how much above your last 3 years average is your crop? (%)

No Responses

Question 9: Was your business inspected by CFIA during the 2019 season?

44 Respondents have been inspected by CFIA in 2019. 18 Have not.



Question 10: If you answered yes to the previous question, please tell us what your experience was.

The responses to this question were written. Their responses have been categorized into common categories. They are shown in the graph below. Majority of the producers had no issues with their inspection. The majority of the issues expressed had to do with the regulations/paperwork being too excessive and not relevant. Some common themes from the responses are listed under the graph.



Common Themes in Inspection Responses:

- Inspectors are not consistent in the ways they inspect new programs
- The regulations won't make the honey any safer
- New act/regulations are too excessive for a primary producer and are more suited for a packer/processor
- Too much pointless paperwork
- Inspectors lack knowledge of honey