

Widespread GM crop adoption created 'agricultural desert,' starving honeybees

The life of honeybees in the United States used to be much simpler, but now beekeepers are navigating a gauntlet of pesticides, diseases and a vast "agricultural desert" devoid of the pollen that serves to nurture bees.

Beekeepers used to have to worry about one disease that infected their colonies, but the introduction of bees from around the world has brought numerous diseases specific to each species with them.

Meanwhile, with farmers turning to genetically modified corn and soybeans across the country, the switch has created a vast "agricultural desert" deprived of the pollen bees need to make honey and feed themselves. When alfalfa and clover were grown in more abundance, a colony of bees could be expected to produce about 200 to 400 pounds of honey in a season. Today, beekeepers are lucky if they can produce about 100 pounds.

"Bees can overcome a lot of diseases. They are durable little insects, but then you have this agri-desert out there. There's nothing out there for them," Doug Hauke, owner of Hauke Honey in Marshfield, said. "They're starving, and when they do go out there, they run into pesticides, and these new diseases. It's the perfect storm out there."

Read the full, original article: [A perfect storm: Disease, pesticides, GMOs affect honeybees](#)