

Recent increase in honeybee population does not necessarily mean health stress crisis over

Honeybee colonies — specifically for operations with five or more colonies in the U.S. — were up in April 2017 compared to the previous year, according to a U.S. Department of Agriculture honeybee health survey released this week.

The number of colonies in the U.S. on April 1, 2017 was 2.89 million colonies, with the amount sitting at 2.80 million on the same date last year.

While it's always good news for the colony population to be on the rise, it might not be the best estimate of honeybee health, according to Nathalie Steinhauer, graduate student at the University of Maryland's Department of Entomology and the Loss and Management Survey coordinator for the Bee Informed Partnership, a nonprofit that works with beekeepers to keep healthier bees.

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Steinhauer said usually, beekeepers add more colonies to make up for their losses because they have to fill a pollination contract and have to have a specific size apiary at a certain time of year. On top of that, they know to expect losses over the winter and need to go into fall with a higher number of colonies, so they split colonies more actively.

"Not only does that come with a lot of cost for the beekeepers themselves, it actually might accentuate the stress on the colonies, so all in all, number of colonies, is probably not a big enough picture," Steinhauer said

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [US Honeybee Colony Numbers Are Up, But Researchers Say Numbers Might Not Reveal Health](#)