

Pacific Northwest Honey Bee Pollination Survey – 2005, Continued

(Continued from page 8)

While colony income from pollination rental is a critical statistic, so therefore is the annual cost to maintain a healthy hive of honey bees. Responses to this question on the survey have varied widely, often from a misunderstanding of what was being asked. However, numerous commercial beekeepers, who have over the years maintained good cost accounting records, have responded with numbers that are very reasonable relative to today's economy. The average annual hive maintenance cost was \$117 per colony for the year 2005 (highest reported per colony maintenance cost = \$155; lowest = \$75). This wide range suggests that beekeepers should try to be more precise in calculating their operational costs. If you can't answer the question of your operating cost on a *per colony basis* you should seriously re-evaluate your operational strategy.

It is important to recognize that the average colony maintenance cost is higher than the average per colony pollination income. From the 2005 survey pollination income was \$112⁸⁵/colony and the colony maintenance cost was \$117; a difference of \$4¹⁵ per colony. This illustrates that net operational profit is generated by sources of income outside of pollination rental, most importantly, honey production.

Remember that the data presented here represent the pollination rental situation of a hypothetical "average" commercial beekeeper in the Pacific Northwest. For individual beekeepers the survey results are most useful as benchmarks against which they should compare their individual operations. Please let me stress again that all of these "projections" are only as accurate as the data provided by responding beekeepers. The projections also assume that the participating beekeepers collectively represent the mainstream of commercial beekeeping in the Pacific Northwest. And as a further cautionary note for this 2005 report, total colony numbers (hence number of rentals) reported were only about half of those reported in recent years. Fewer larger scale beekeepers in Oregon and Washington participated in the 2005 survey. However, averages generated from a collective 52,000 rentals in 2005 are not insignificant.

I wish to again thank all those beekeepers in Oregon and Washington who took the time to participate in the survey, which over the past 19 years, has generated the most accurate assessment of commercial pollination known in the U.S.

(Continued on page 10)

Summary Information - 2005

Total number of participating commercial beekeepers = **14**

Total number of colonies in the survey = **23,285**

Total colony rentals = **52,339**

The average per colony pollination rental fee (for all beekeepers, for all crops including California almonds) was: **\$51³⁰**

The average commercial colony was placed in **2.2** pollination sets in 2005, for an average per hive rental income of **\$112⁸⁵**

The average commercial bee operation maintained 2,055 colonies and grossed **\$231,906** in pollination rental income for 2005.

Table 1. Average Pollination Fee 1994-2005

| <u>1994</u> | <u>1995</u> | <u>1996</u> | <u>1997</u> | <u>1998</u> | <u>1999</u> | <u>2000</u> | <u>2001</u> | <u>2002</u> | <u>2003</u> | <u>2004</u> | <u>2005</u> |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 28.10 | 29.60 | 31.55 | 31.05 | 29.65 | 32.25 | 32.85 | 33.65 | 36.40 | 36.45 | 38.65 | 51.30 |