



Beekeeping in Bulgaria 2023

The number of bee colonies on October the 1, 2023 is 816.6 thousand, which is 0.8% less than in 2022. The bee colonies, used for the production of honey in 2023 decreased by 2.0% and amounted to 659 thousand. The honey production is 11 189 tons, or 6.3% less compared to 2022. The average production from one bee colony is 17.0 kg. The number of bee colonies in the Yuzhen tsentralen region increased 5.4% and in the Severoiztochen region 2.5%. During the year of observation, 3.0 tons of propolis and over 46.8 tons of bee pollen have been produced.

The number of holdings breeding bee colonies decreased to 9 433 (-7.7%) in 2023. Holdings with over 150 and more bee colonies increased by 4.1%.

More than 40 thousand bee colonies died in 2023 in total.

For the 2023, 4 870 tons of honey have been sold to processors, 2 392 tons have been sold directly, 483 tons – to retailers, 870 tons – to the industry, and 1 431 tons – for own consumption.

Table 1

Beekeeping holdings, bee colonies and honey production by statistical regions in 2023						
Statistical zones (NUTS 1) and statistical regions (NUTS 2)	Beekeeping holdings	Bee colonies	Bee colonies, used for the production of honey	Average number of bee colonies	Honey production	Average honey production per a bee colony
	01.10.2023	01.10.2023				
	(number)	(number)	(number)	(number)	(number)	(kg)
Bulgaria	9 433	816 673	659 002	86.6	11 189	17.0
Severna i Yugoiztochna Bulgaria	7 138	680 126	553 888	95.3	9 934	17.9
Severozapaden	1 960	124 633	105 682	63.6	2 118	20.0
Severen tsentralen	1 480	186 672	157 354	126.1	3 046	19.4
Severoiztochen	1 785	194 658	152 235	109.1	2 655	17.4
Yugoiztochen	1 913	174 163	138 617	91.0	2 115	15.3
Yugozapadna i Yuzhna tsentralna Bulgaria	2 295	136 547	105 114	59.5	1 254	11.9
Yugozapaden	781	39 990	32 929	51.2	382	11.6
Yuzhen tsentralen	1 514	96 557	72 185	63.8	872	12.1

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostatistics Department, Survey Beekeeping in Bulgaria

Table 2

Destroyed bee colonies and losses caused by various factors in 2023 by statistical regions						
Statistical zones (NUTS 1) and statistical regions (NUTS 2)	Destroyed Bee colonies	of which				Change 2023/2022
		By poisoning	By diseases	By hunger	Other reasons	
	(number)	(number)	(number)	(number)	(number)	(%)
Bulgaria	40 695	7 270	6 968	4 690	21 767	-8.9%
Severna i Yugoiztochna Bulgaria	34 662	6 551	5 686	3 136	19 289	1.0%
Severozapaden	4 936	558	663	1 488	2 227	-11.4%
Severen tsentralen	4 883	583	411	262	3 627	-47.1%
Severoiztochen	7 304	833	1 985	583	3 903	23.0%
Yugoiztochen	17 539	4 577	2 627	803	9 532	29.1%
Yugozapadna i Yuzhna tsentralna Bulgaria	6 033	719	1 282	1 554	2 478	-41.6%
Yugozapaden	1 528	341	261	319	607	-29.6%
Yuzhen tsentralen	4 505	378	1 021	1 235	1 871	-44.8%

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostatistics Department, Survey Beekeeping in Bulgaria

Results and analyses

Table 3

Beekeeping holdings by statistical regions in 2022 and 2023						
Statistical zones (NUTS 1) and statistical regions (NUTS 2)	Beekeeping colonies at 1.10.2022	Beekeeping colonies at 1.10.2023	Change 2023/2022	Bee colonies, used for the production of honey in 2022	Bee colonies, used for the production of honey in 2023	Change 2023/2022
	(number)	(number)	(%)	(number)	(number)	%
Bulgaria	823 250	816 673	-0.8%	672 163	659 002	-2.0%
Severna i Yugoiztochna Bulgaria	690 069	680 126	-1.4%	568 968	553 888	-2.7%
Severozapaden	136 483	124 633	-8.7%	117 564	105 682	-10.1%
Severen tsentralen	188 121	186 672	-0.8%	158 559	157 354	-0.8%
Severoiztochen	189 906	194 658	2.5%	156 749	152 235	-2.9%
Yugoiztochen	175 559	174 163	-0.8%	136 096	138 617	1.9%
Yugozapadna i Yuzhna tsentralna Bulgaria	133 181	136 547	2.5%	103 195	105 114	1.9%
Yugozapaden	41 600	39 990	-3.9%	35 251	32 929	-6.6%
Yuzhen tsentralen	91 581	96 557	5.4%	67 944	72 185	6.2%

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostatistics Department, Survey Beekeeping in Bulgaria

Figure 1. Bee colonies (number)

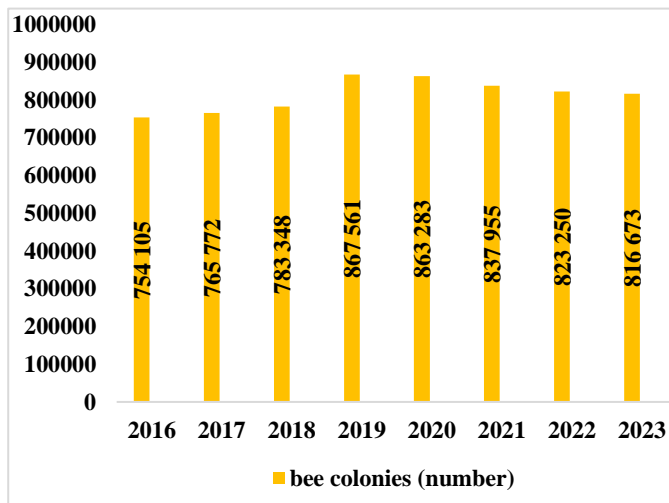
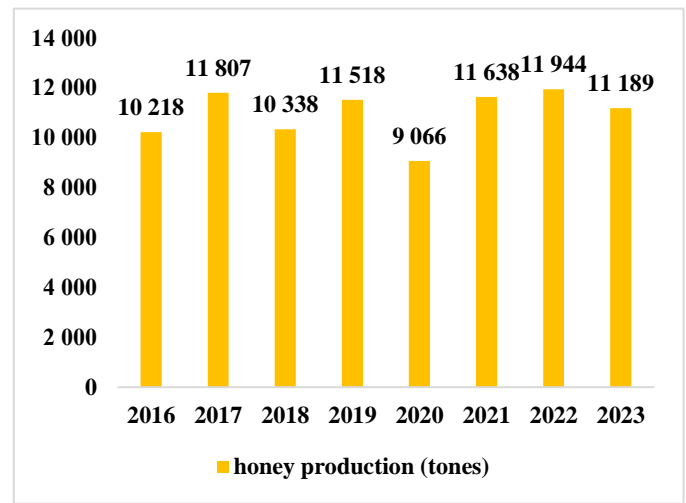


Figure 2. Honey production (tones) in Bulgaria



Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostatistics Department, Survey Beekeeping in Bulgaria

Table 4

Number of bee colonies in a holding	Holdings by number of bee colonies								
	Holdings at 1 st October			Bee colonies at 1 st October			Average number of bee colonies		
	2022	2023	Change 2023/2022	2022	2023	Change 2023/2022	2022	2023	Change 2023/2022
	(number)	(number)	(%)	(number)	(number)	(%)	(number)	(number)	(%)
1 to 9	1 238	949	-23.3%	5 882	4 108	-30.2%	4.8	4.3	-10.4%
10 to 49	3 455	3 136	-9.2%	79 340	73 792	-7.0%	23.0	23.5	2.2%
50 to 149	3 383	3 112	-8.0%	298 194	277 730	-6.9%	88.1	89.2	1.2%
150 and more	2 148	2 236	4.1%	439 834	461 043	4.8%	204.8	206.2	0.7%
Total	10 224	9 433	-7.7%	823 250	816 673	-0.8%	80.5	86.6	7.5%

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostatistics Department, Survey Beekeeping in Bulgaria

Table 5

Distribution of honey and average selling prices (ASP)					
Market distribution	Amount of bee honey sold in 2022	Average price* 2022	Amount of bee honey sold in 2023	Average price* 2023	Change of the average price 2023/2022
	(tonnes)	(BGN/kg)	(tonnes)	(BGN/kg)	(%)
Direct sales to	2 127	8.90	2 392	8.96	0.7%
Direct sales to retailers	461	8.27	483	7.44	-10.0%
Sales to processors	4 441	5.85	4 870	4.69	-19.8%
Sales to the industry	510	5.91	870	4.36	-26.2%
Total sales	7 539	6.86	8 615	6.00	-12.5%
For own consumption and bee feeding	1 437	-	1 431	-	-

*VAT excl.

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostatics Department, Survey Beekeeping in Bulgaria

Figure 3. Bee colonies holdings (number)

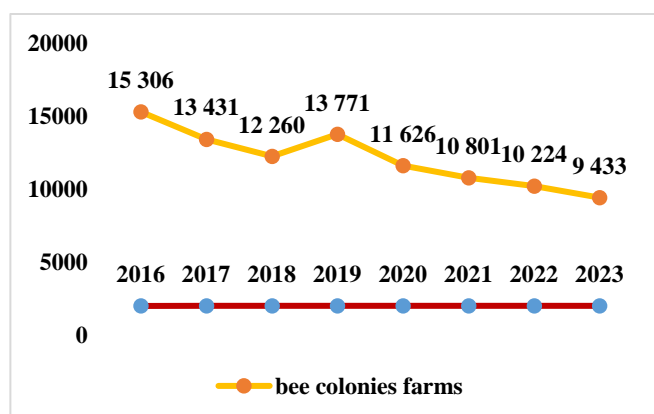
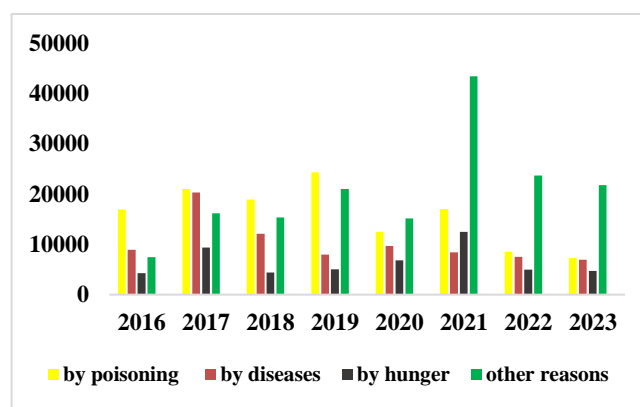


Figure 4. Destroyed bee colonies (number)



Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostatics Department, Survey Beekeeping in Bulgaria

Table 6

Preventive measures and bee colonies feeding in 2022 and 2023						
Measures	2022		2023		Change 2023/2022	
	Bee colonies	Average costs for one bee colony	Bee colonies	Average costs for one bee colony	Bee colonies	Average costs for one bee colony
	(number)	(BGN)	(number)	(BGN)	(%)	(%)
Treatment against varroaosis	810 439	6.61	804 160	6.54	-0.8%	-1.1%
Autumn feeding	539 411	8.80	543 072	9.70	0.7%	10.2%
Winter feeding	493 350	8.57	494 963	9.46	0.3%	10.4%
Spring feeding	581 579	9.24	566 773	9.91	-2.5%	7.3%
Other costs	686 204	16.07	679 009	17.60	-1.0%	9.5%

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostatics Department, Survey Beekeeping in Bulgaria

Table 7

Storage of honey and storage value (including transport and storage costs)					
Type of storage container	Storage value			Relative share of holdings using storage containers by type	
	2022	2023	Change 2023/2022	2022	2023
	(BGN/kg)	(BGN/kg)	(%)	(%)	(%)
In tins	0.47	0.49	4.26%	75.95%	76.79%
Glass jars	0.83	0.91	9.64%	44.72%	48.69%
In plastic packaging	0.74	0.87	17.57%	2.95%	3.47%
Other packaging	0.56	0.93	66.07%	0.71%	1.23%

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostatics Department, Survey Beekeeping in Bulgaria

Table 8

Mobile beekeeping				
Characteristics	(units)	2022	2023	Change 2023/2022 (%)
Bee colonies, involved in mobile beekeeping	(number)	26 182	21 407	-18.2%
Holdings, practicing mobile beekeeping	(number)	236	265	12.3%
Value of transport costs and veterinary certificates	(BGN/bee colony)	14.44	14.18	-6.9%

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostistics Department, Survey Beekeeping in Bulgaria

In 2023, 29 holdings with 5 298 bee colonies indicated that they had 36 agreements (written or verbal) with farmers for crop pollination.

Methodological notes

The survey purpose is to determine the number of bee colonies on 1st October 2023, the honey production in 2023, the sale and average prices (VAT excl.) of the sold honey, the main costs of the production and storage of bee honey, the number of destroyed bee colonies in 2023 and the reasons for their destruction. The survey data is used for analyses and programs for the sector, as well as to make management decisions in the implementation of agrarian policy in beekeeping. The legal basis for the statistical survey is the National Statistical Program for 2023. The results of the conducted survey are in accordance with the requirements of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/1475 for determining detailed rules for the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council regarding the assessment of CAP strategic plans and the submission of information on monitoring and evaluation. The used definitions in the survey are those specified in the cited regulations.

Surveyed Statistical indicators:

1. Holdings raising bee colonies, bee honey production and sale - number of holdings with bee colonies; number of bee colonies; honey production- tons; average honey production - kg from 1 bee colony; sold honey - tons; prices of sold honey - BGN per kilogram.
2. Distribution of honey production - direct sales to, sales to retailers, to processors, to the industry, own consumption by the farmer's household.
3. Indicators for the prevention, production and other costs, related to the bee colonies - value of preventive treatments against varroaosis, costs of bee feeding, number of destroyed bee colonies, mobile beekeeping and honey storage.

The questionnaire consists of 22 questions and covers administrative information about the holding, legal status, registration number of the apiary according to Ordinance No. 10 of April 1, 2015 on the conditions for registration and the procedure for identification of bee colonies, number of bee colonies, quantity and sale of honey production, production costs and costs related to the storage of honey.

Scope, model and volume of the sample - the sample (stratified and random) is prepared using a list of holdings breeding bee colonies from the Census of agricultural holdings in Bulgaria in 2020 and new holdings created after 2021, information about which is obtained from the farmers' register under Ordinance No. 3/1999. 3 228 holdings breeding bee colonies are surveyed. The organization and control of the survey is carried out by the Agrostistics Department at the Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

Confidentiality – the national confidentiality rules are defined in the Statistics Act. According to Art. 25 individual statistical data as well as statistical information that summarizes data for less than three statistical units or for an aggregate in which the relative share of the value of a studied parameter of one unit is over 85 percent of the total value of this parameter for all units of the population cannot be disclosed or provided.

Accessibility and transparency - the data on the number of bee colonies, destroyed bee colonies during the year, on the amount of bee honey production and the honey sales are available to users on the website of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food: <http://www.mzh.government.bg/bg/statistika-i-analizi/izsledvane-zhivotnovdstvo/danni/>, in accordance with the deadline established in the National Statistical Program and in the Calendar for the dissemination of the results of the statistical surveys conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

Distribution of administrative districts by statistical regions (NUTS 2) – Severozapaden: Vidin, Vratsa, Montana, Lovech, Pleven; **Severententralen:** Veliko Tarnovo, Gabrovo, Ruse, Silistra, Razgrad; **Severoztochen:** Varna, Dobrich, Targovishte, Shoumen; **Yugoiztochen:** Burgas, Sliven, Stara Zagora, Yambol; **Yugozapaden:** Blagoevgrad, Kyustendil, Pernik, Sofia-cap., Sofia region; **Yuzhen tsentralen:** Kardzhali, Pazardzhik, Plovdiv, Smolyan, Haskovo.

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