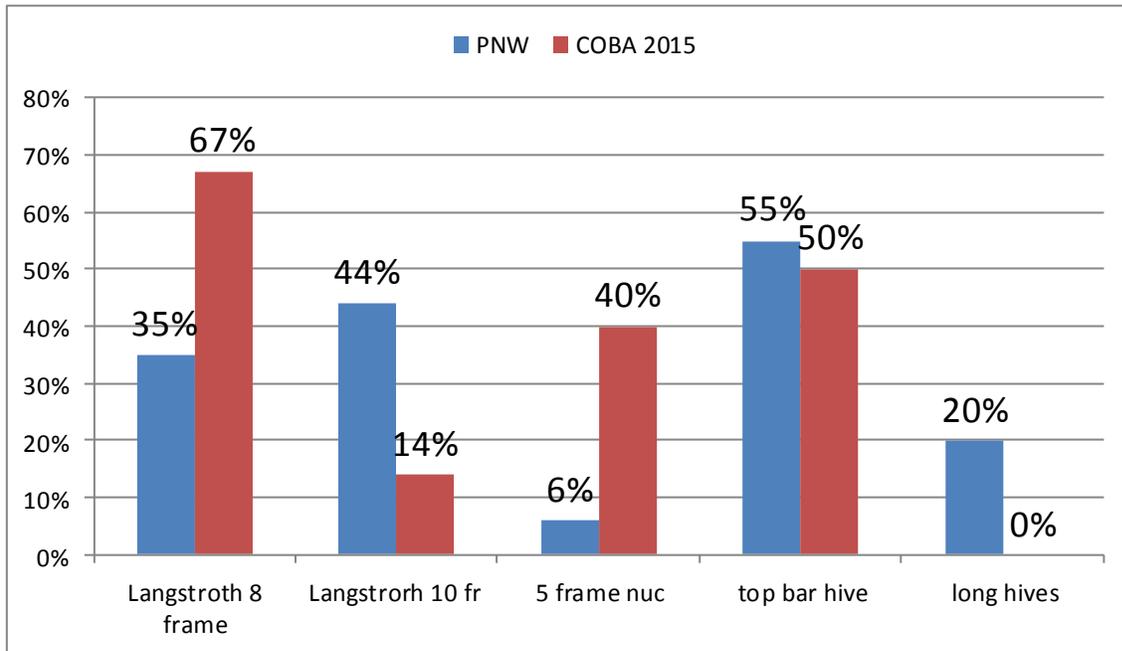


COBA Bee Loss report 2016

I received 9 bee loss surveys from COBA members, 3 more than last year, as part of the 219 Oregon beekeeper returns (same as last year). COBA respondents entered winter with 3 Langstroth 8 frame hives (lost 2), 28 Langstroth 10 frame hives (lost 4), 6 top bar hives (lost ½) and 3 long hives (all survived). **Total overwinter loss was 9 hives or 23%.** This was the 2nd best survivorship among 14 OR associations and was 17 percentage points better than the statewide loss rate of 40%.



Three of the seven Central Oregon respondents had zero loss. Two individuals lost 1 colony, two individuals lost 2 and one individual lost 3 colonies. Most individuals (56%) maintained 2 or 3 colonies with one having 4 and another 6 colonies; largest number of colonies was 16. Seven of 9 respondents indicated they had a mentor/experienced beekeeper available as they were learning beekeeping which was 12 percentage points better than Oregon beekeepers.

Queen failure, varroa mites and yellow jackets were the most common reasons cited for losses, with starvation and weak also listed. Three individuals said zero loss was an acceptable loss level, one said 10%, 2 20%, 1 33% and 2 50%. Statewide, 15% or less was indicated by half of the responding beekeepers as an acceptable loss level.

Six of nine COBA members said they fed sugar syrup, 4 fed pollen patties, 3 each fed frames of honey and dry pollen, one each frames of pollen and hard sugar (candy). One did no feeding. Multiple choices could be selected. Except for the dry pollen feeding, the top choices followed statewide responses - sugar syrup with pollen patties and frames of honey were in the top five choices along with some form of dry sugar/fondant or sugar candy.

For wintering practices, two said they did none of the 8 choices, four indicated they provided wind/weather protection, 3 wrapped their hives (only 12% statewide chose this option) and two each equalized (again only 12% statewide did this), Insulated the colony top, provided a rain shelter (39% did a rain shelter statewide) and added a ventilation box (quilt box) at colony top (which was overwhelming choice statewide).

Six individuals used Screen bottom boards on 100% of their hives, leaving them open during winter while 2 did not use them. Six individuals said they monitored for mites. Multiple choices were possible with question of how colonies were monitored – 5 said mite drop (sticky board) and 3 sugar shake. Three also said they visually looked for mites on adults and in brood.

Seven COBA members said they treated their hives while 2 said they did not – those 2 individuals who did not treat lost 50% and 67% of their hives. For alternative treatments, 7 used Screen bottom boards, 4 apiary site selection and apiary colony configuration, two did drone brood removal and minimum hive inspection. Six of the 7 did more than one alternative. For chemical treatment, 4 each treated with Formic acid (MAQS) and powdered sugar while 2 each used Apiguard and Oxalic acid. Two of the 4 using powdered sugar used only this material (and both had no loss) while 3 mixed acids and oils and 2 used both oxalic and formic acids.

Thanks to all who completed a survey. See the website <http://pnwhoneybeesurvey.com/survey-results/2015-16-survey-reports/> for stateside report and also my analysis of Screen bottom board use (there was a slight advantage (better survival) for individuals who used SBB statewide) and use of treatments; slightly better survival if an alternative was used while use of a chemical significantly improved survival rate.