

2020 Winter Hive Monitoring Study

Goal: To gather and analyze data from hive monitoring systems across the state to better understand the effects of moisture on overwintering hives and how our winterizing methods might be improved.

Requirements to participate:

1. Hive monitoring system which collects temperature and humidity data as well as optionally collecting weight data.
2. Sharing the data either real time or monthly so it can be aggregated and compared with other data being collected.
3. Answering question on hive management practices (e.g. winterization methods, winter feeding, moisture systems)

Procedures:

1. For each hive enrolled in the study, the beekeeper will have to fill out an information form (attached) describing basic management practices as well as physical information about that hive.
2. Just before winterizing/wrapping the hive, the beekeeper (if possible) should take a picture of the hive using a FLIR camera to determine the size and location of the cluster. This will be used to understand how big the cluster is going into winter, its location, etc. *(Note: We are NOT requiring a beekeeper to have a FLIR (or FLIR-like camera) to participate – this is a “nice to have”. Also, some fire stations will loan out their cameras so the beekeeper could get an infrared picture to see where the cluster is)*
3. Beekeeper winterizes the hive as they have described & sets the temperature & humidity probes under the inner cover.
4. Monitoring will begin approximately Nov 1 (or as soon as you have the monitors in their wintering positions)
5. Monitoring data can be submitted in different ways.
 - Monthly via an excel compatible spreadsheet
 - Live stream via a link that can be accessed via the web

Note: for analysis purposes, excel compatible spreadsheet is preferred, but we understand that might not be possible for all beekeepers

6. Throughout the winter - if possible, the beekeeper should try to estimate where the cluster is in the hive and submit the information to the study.

7. Monitoring will continue until March 15

8. The beekeeper will answer another set of questions about the hive at the end of the session. For example:

- were the bees alive? if not - when do you think they died.

- any sign of mold? or other moisture?