

**Summary of the honey bee husbandry survey
2022**

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Number of responses.

1644 responses were obtained. 1643 responses were given in English and a single response was given in Welsh. Where questions were optional, the number of responses received is given for each question.

Background information

Apiary numbers

The majority of surveyed beekeepers kept bees a single local authority with 82 beekeepers keeping bees in two local authorities and seven beekeepers keeping bees across three local authorities. Overall, the average number of apiaries maintained by beekeepers was 2.3 apiaries per beekeeper (3739 apiaries/1644 beekeepers). When beekeepers were asked how many colonies they keep on average, they answered an average of 5.4 colonies¹.

The majority of apiaries (75.3%) were kept in rural locations (Table 1).

Table 1. Number of apiaries kept in rural and urban locations. *Donates where multiple answers were allowed.

Apiary location*	How many apiaries do you have in urban areas?	How many apiaries do you have in rural areas?
Rural	59 (1.6%)	2566 (68.6%)
Urban	681 (18.2%)	45 (1.2%)
Rural and Urban	183 (4.9%)	205 (5.5%)
Total	923 (24.7%)	2816 (75.3%)

The reasons for keeping bees

In total, 1595 beekeepers provided a reason for keeping bees, with the majority of beekeepers (62.6%) answered they are keeping bees to help the environment (Table 2 & Figure 1).

Table 2. Reasons for keeping bees in descending order from the most popular to the least popular reason for keeping bees. *Donates where multiple answers were allowed.

Why do you keep bees?	No. of beekeepers*	% of responses
To help the environment	999	62.6
To harvest honey/ bee products for personal use	973	61.0
To save the bees	709	44.5
To do something practical	657	41.2
To be part of a beekeeping community	561	35.2
Health and well being	555	34.8
As an interest in entomology	438	27.5
To spend more time outside	372	23.3
Change in personal/work circumstances (including retiring, moving to a new house etc.)	366	22.9
To sell honey/ bee products	340	21.3
Family history of beekeeping	175	11.0
Other reasons	145	9.1

¹ Where beekeepers gave answers between two numbers, the midpoint was used.

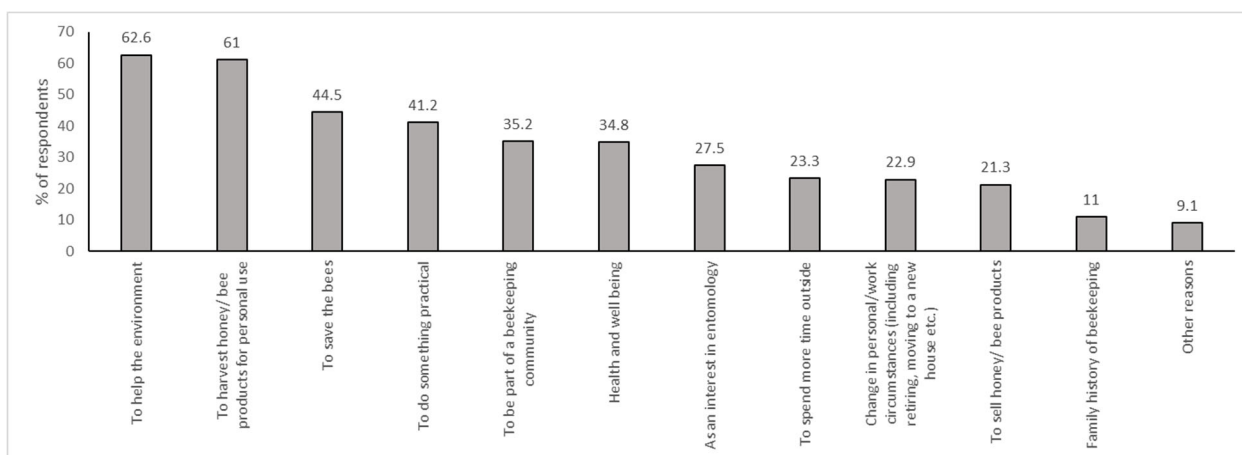


Figure 1. Reasons for keeping bees. 1595 beekeepers provided a reason for keeping bees. Beekeepers could select more than one answer.

Beekeeping association membership

In total 1644 beekeepers provided information on beekeeping association membership, with 1422 then providing information on the association(s) with which they held membership (Table 3, Figure 2). The majority of beekeepers (87.2%) were members of a beekeeping association, with most beekeepers (87.3%) being members of the British Beekeepers Association (BBKA).

Table 3. Beekeeping association membership. *Donates where multiple answers were allowed.

Are you a member of a beekeeping association?	No. of beekeepers	% of responses
No	210	12.8
Yes	1434	87.2
Association membership breakdown	No. of beekeepers	% of responses
British Beekeepers' Association	1241	87.3
Welsh Beekeepers' Association	91	6.4
Bee Farmers' Association	6	0.4
Independent beekeeper association	68	4.8

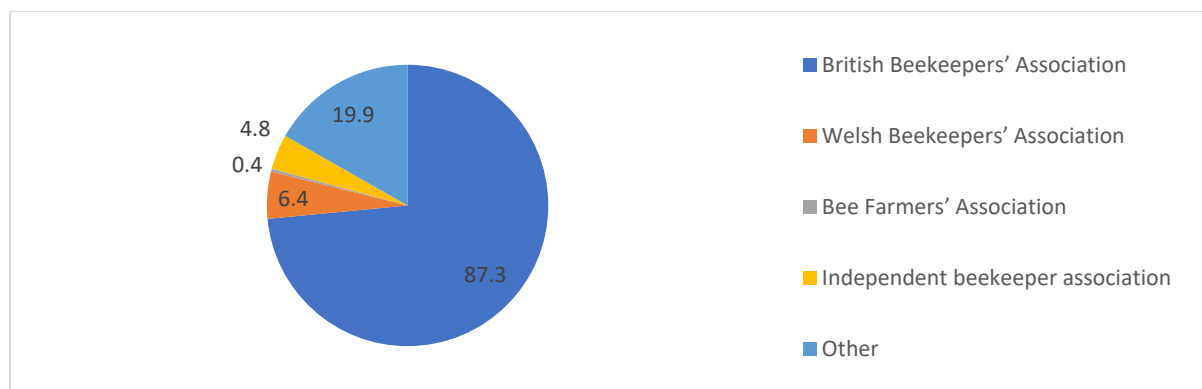


Figure 2. Percentage beekeeping association membership.

Population changes

Colony numbers and losses

373 (22%) of beekeepers lost colonies over the summer (April 1st to October 1st, 2021) and 503 (31%) of beekeepers lost colonies of the winter (October 1st, 2021, to April 1st, 2022).

Overall, reported summer losses were 9% (587 of 6623) and winter losses were 13%² (937 of 7275). However, the number of colonies increased from April 2021 to October 2021, then decreased to April 2022, but remained higher than in April 2021 (Table 4 & Figure 3).

Table 4. The number of colonies from April 2021 to April 2022.

Date	Number of colonies & (av. per beekeeper)	% Change
April 2021	6623 (4.0)	n/a
October 2021	7275 (4.4)	+ 10%
April 2022	6835 (3.2)	- 6%

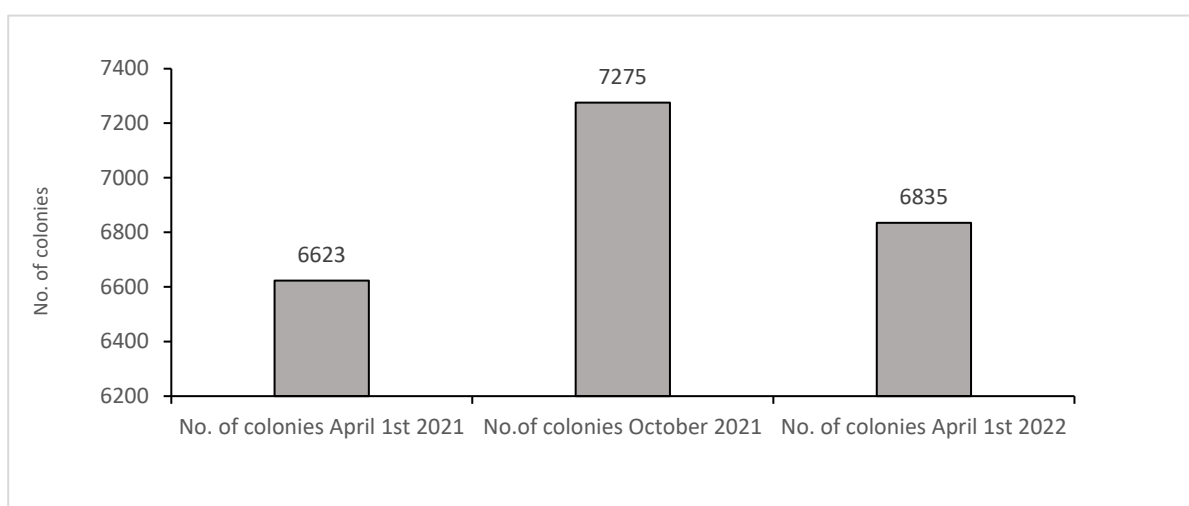


Figure 3. The number of colonies from April 2021 to April 2022.

Husbandry practices

Frequency of visits to colonies

The majority of beekeepers (69%) visited their colonies once a week or more during the active bee season (Table 5 & Figure 4). Only 2.7% of beekeepers visited their colonies less than once per month.

Table 5. Frequency of beekeeper visits to colonies during the active bee season.

How often do you visit your bees during the active bee season?	No. of beekeepers	% of responses
Once a week or more	1135	69.0
Every 2 weeks	343	20.9
Monthly	122	7.4
Less than once per month	44	2.7

² The question asking for winter losses contained an error, asking for losses between 1st October 2020 and 1st April 2022. As the question also referred to the number of colonies lost 'of those colonies held on 1st October 2021', the answers were assumed to be for between 1st October 2021 and 1st April 2022.

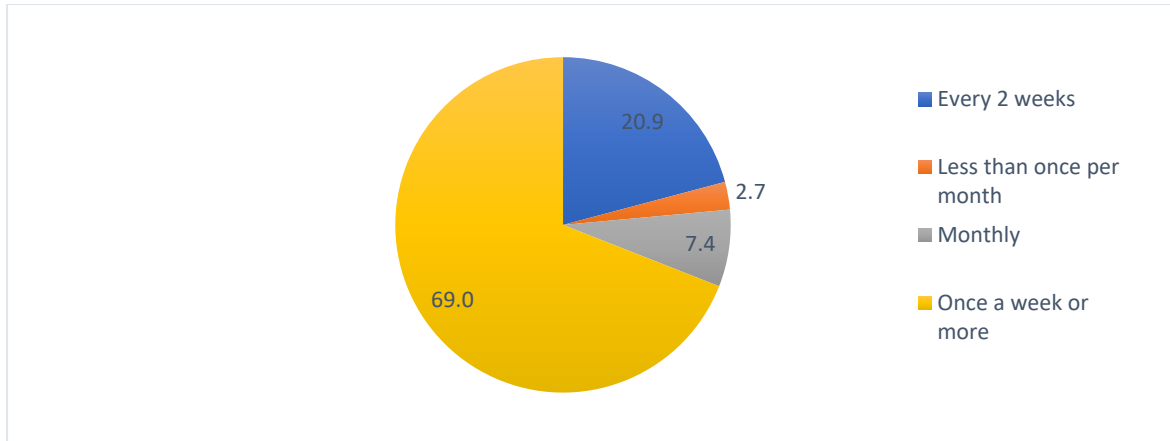


Figure 4. Percentages of how often beekeepers visit their bees.

Feeding

The majority of beekeepers (80.5%) fed their colonies between April 2021 and April 2022 (Table 6).

Table 6. Colony feeding activities of beekeepers between April 2021 and April 2022.

Did you feed your bees between April 2021 and April 2022	No. of beekeepers	% of responses
No	320	19.5
Yes	1324	80.5

Treatments

The majority of beekeepers (79.6%) treated their bees for pests and diseases between April 2021 and April 2022³. In total, 77.6% did so against *Varroa* (Table 7 & Figure 5).

Table 7. Treatments against honeybee pests and diseases between April 2021 and April 2022. *Donates where multiple answers were allowed.

Did you treat your bees for pests and diseases between April 2021 and April 2022?	No. of beekeepers	% of responses
No	391	23.8
Yes	1309	79.6
Reason for treating	No. of beekeepers	% of responses
As a managed precaution against <i>Varroa</i>	1227	74.6
As an emergency response to <i>Varroa</i>	48	2.9
Against <i>Varroa</i> (total)	1275	77.6
As a managed precaution against another pest or disease	26	1.6
As an emergency response to another pest or disease	8	0.5

³ Two responses deleted due to giving answers for both treating and not treating.

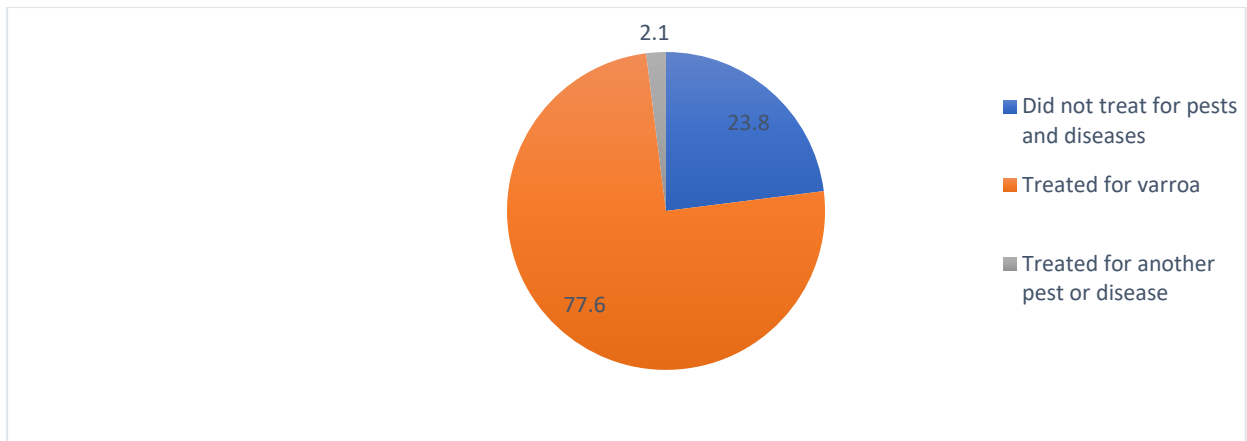


Figure 5. Percentage of beekeepers that either treated for varroa, another pest or disease or did not treat at all.

Comb replacement

The majority of beekeepers (42.8%) replace 0 to 24% of their brood combs every 3 years (Table 8 & Figure 6).

Table 8. Comb replacement activities of beekeepers.

On average, what proportion of your brood combs do you replace every 3 years?	No. of beekeepers	% of responses
0 to 24%	703	42.8
25 to 49%	438	26.6
50 to 74%	219	13.3
75 to 100%	284	17.3

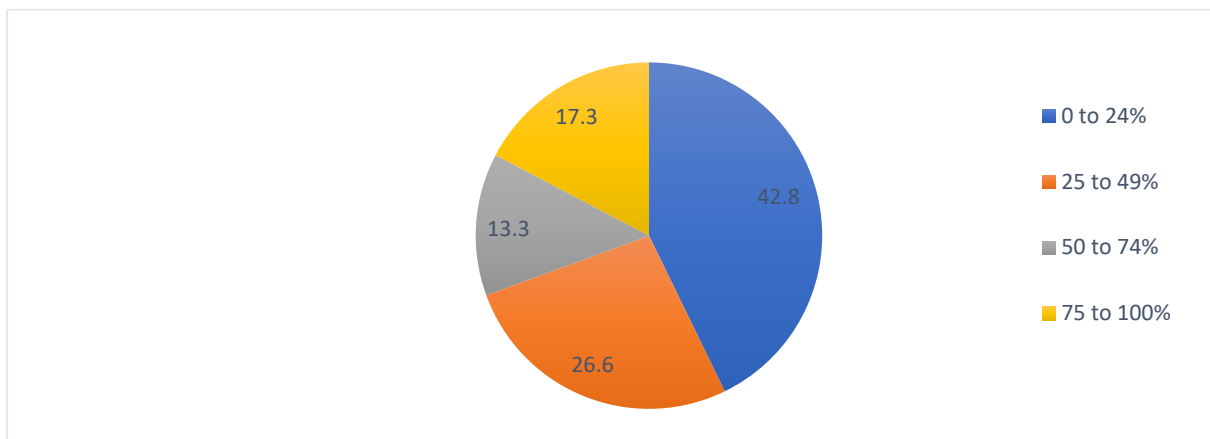


Figure 6. Percentage of comb replacement by beekeepers.

Queens

In total, 1591 beekeepers provided information on where they source their new queens from. The majority of beekeepers (66.5%) sourced new queens from their own colonies naturally (Table 9 & Figure 7).

Table 9. Origin of new queens. *Donates where multiple answers were allowed.

Where do you source your new queens from?	No. of beekeepers*	% of responses
Own colonies naturally	1058	66.5
Own colonies selective	353	22.2
Sourced from association/local beekeeper	252	15.8
Sourced from a supplier	310	19.5

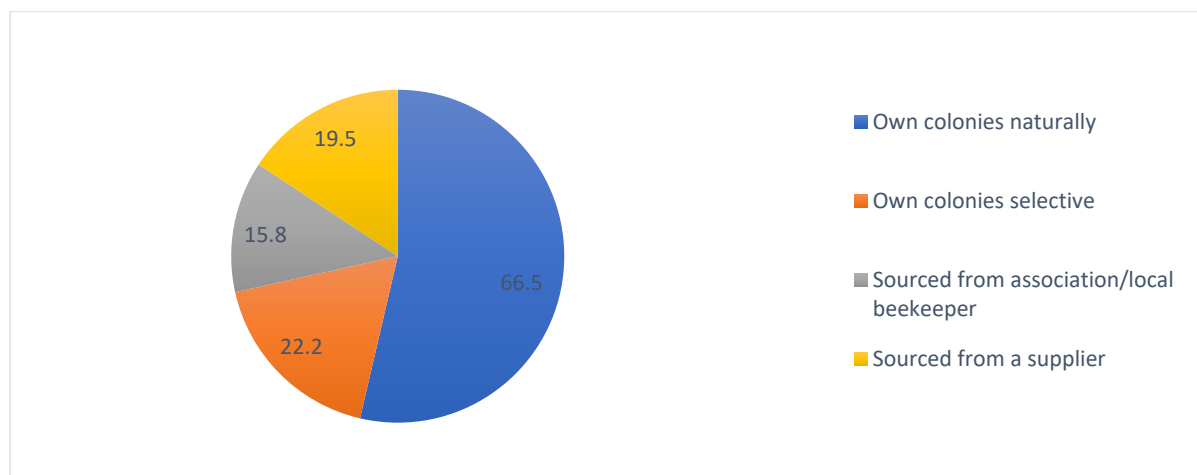


Figure 7. Percentage of queen sources by beekeepers.

Education, advice and support

Training received

1470 beekeepers responded to say they had received the training outlined in Table 10.

Table 10. Training received of 1470 responses. *Donates where multiple answers were allowed.

Training type received	No. of beekeepers*	% of responses
DASH	11	0.7
Online course	248	16.9
Hive-side practical training	1068	72.7
Classroom based training	1065	72.4

664 beekeepers responded to say they received the training outlined in Table 11 between 1st April 2021 and 1st April 2022.

Table 11. Training received between 1st April 2021 and 1st April 2022 of 664 responses. *Donates where multiple answers were allowed.

Training type received	No. of beekeepers*	% of responses
DASH	8	1.2
Online course	149	22.4
Hive-side practical training	316	47.6
Classroom based training	214	32.2

Support

The majority of beekeepers (70.8%) get support in their beekeeping practices from the beekeeping associations, while only 1.8% reported they could not find support (Table 12 & Figure 8).

Additionally, approximately half of the beekeepers that completed the survey (51.9%) reported they provide support to less experienced beekeepers (Table 12 & Figure 7).

Table 12. Sources of support for beekeepers. *Donates where multiple answers were allowed.

Which of the following provide support for you as a beekeeper?	No. of beekeepers*	% of responses
Experienced beekeeper – informal mentoring	874	53.2
Mentoring set up by a beekeeping association	294	17.9
New beekeeper mutual support group	147	8.9
Beekeeping Association	1164	70.8
Online beekeeping group	405	24.6
None – I don't need support	174	10.6
None – I couldn't find support	29	1.8
Do you provide support to less experienced beekeepers?	No. of beekeepers	% of responses
No	853	51.9
Yes	791	48.1

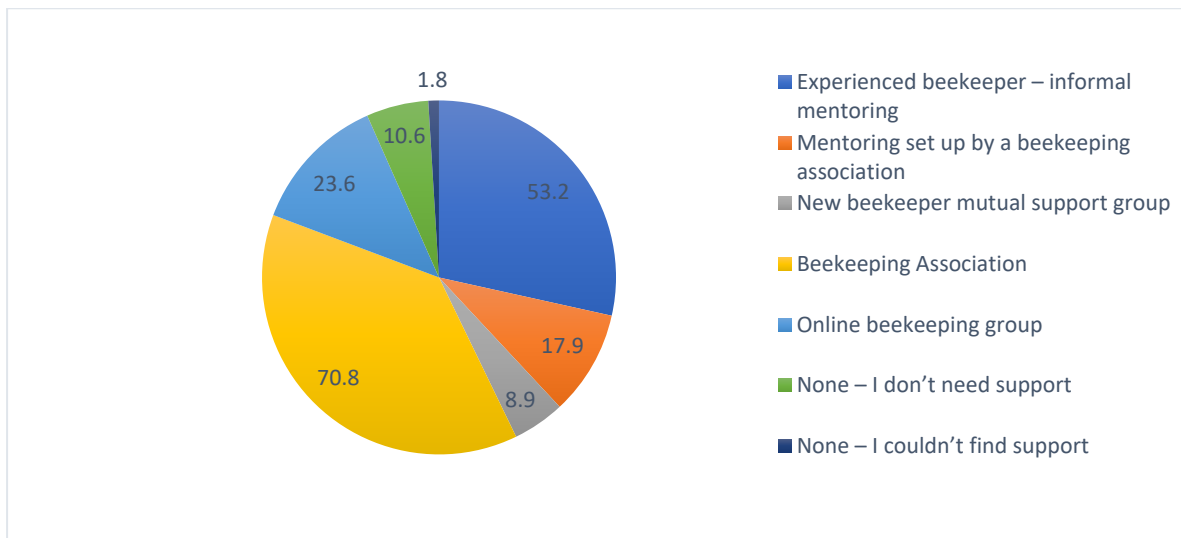


Figure 8. Percentage of support sources provided for beekeepers.

1627 beekeepers provided answers on where they go for support for their beekeeping practices. The majority of beekeepers (67.2%) use their local bee group for support in their beekeeping practices (Table 13 & Figure 9).

Table 13. Sources of support for sought out by beekeepers. *Donates where multiple answers were allowed.

Where do you go when you need advice about beekeeping or bee health?	No. of beekeepers*	% of responses
Local bee group	1093	67.2
Local bee inspector	550	33.8
Online - beekeeper blogs	549	33.7
BeeBase	1042	64.0
NBU social media	103	6.3
Online - beekeeper sites (not BeeBase)	566	34.8
Friends/Family	319	19.6

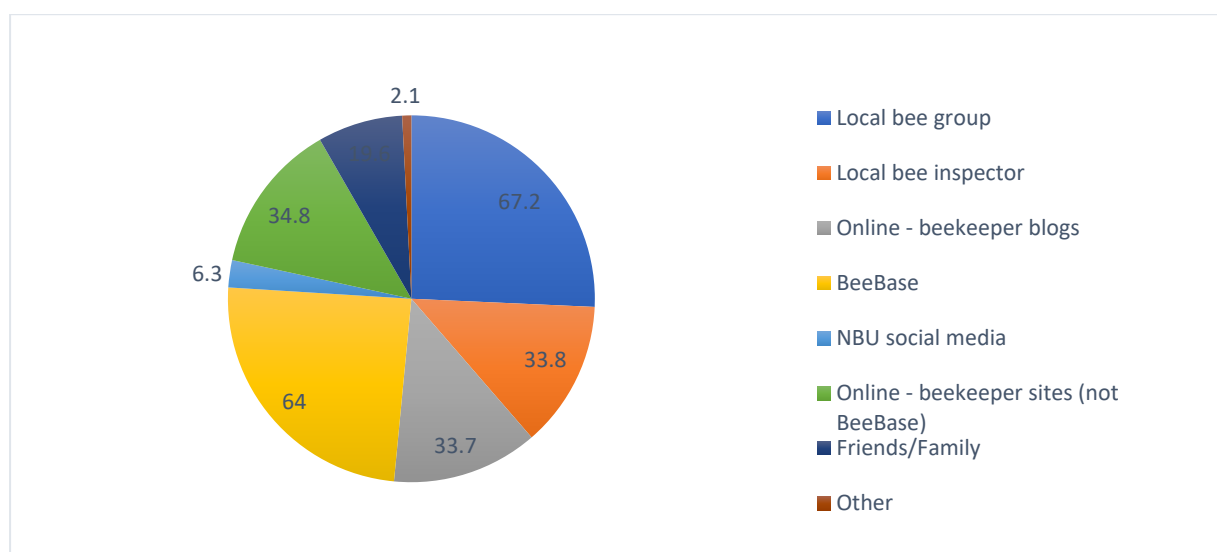


Figure 9. Percentage of support sources sourced by beekeepers.

Disease recognition

In all cases, the majority of beekeepers responded to say they could recognise Foulbrood disease and Small hive beetle (Table 14).

Table 14. Pest and disease recognition. *Donates where multiple answers were allowed.

Pest/disease*	Yes, I can recognise	No, I cannot recognise
EFB	1464 (89.1%)	161 (9.8%)
AFB	1367 (83.2%)	193 (11.7%)
Small hive beetle	1121 (68.2%)	424 (25.8%)

Contact with the NBU

The majority of beekeepers (81.5%) had not had contact with the NBU for advice on beekeeping (Table 15).

Table 15. Contact with the NBU for beekeeping advice. *Donates where multiple answers were allowed.

Contact time period for advice	No. of beekeepers*	% of responses
Prior to the last 12 months	162	9.9
In the last 12 months	129	7.8
Both prior to, and during the last 12 months	13	0.8
No contact	1340	81.5

The majority of beekeepers (90.2%) had not had contact with the NBU for beekeeper training (Table 16).

Table 16. Contact with the NBU for beekeeper training. *Donates where multiple answers were allowed.

Contact time period for training	No. of beekeepers*	% of responses
Prior to the last 12 months	98	6.0
In the last 12 months	56	3.4
Both prior to, and during the last 12 months	5	0.3
No contact	1483	90.2

Overall, the 86.2% of beekeepers (1417 or 1644) had not had any contact with the NBU in the previous 12 months for any other reason.