

South-East Honey Survey 2007

Firstly I would like to thank all the beekeepers that have taken the trouble to respond to my request for honey crop and price statistics. This year I have had many more responses (93). Unfortunately, a good number of the replies do not give sale prices for the honey, some state that they do not sell to the public, others are clearly reluctant to reveal what they charge. I am happy to use the production figures from these surveys but it does make the price averages somewhat less accurate.

In the discussion below, I have made comparison with the final results from the previous survey asking the same questions about the 2006 season, so that you can compare this directly to last years survey.

Results 2007

- **Average Honey Yield**
93 replies ranging from 0.0lbs to 143.3lbs per colony
2007 average = 39lbs (2006 = 51lb)
- **Direct Sales Price (Flower):**
49 replies ranging from £2.00/lb to £5.00/lb
2007 average = £3.34/lb (2006 = £3.54/lb)
- **Wholesale Honey Price (Flower):**
18 replies ranging from £2.00/lb to £10.00/lb
2007 average = £3.13/lb (2006 = £2.18/lb)
- **Bulk Honey Price (Flower):**
3 replies ranging from £2.25/lb to £8.50/lb
2007 average = £4.42/lb (2006 = £1.33/lb)
- **Cut comb:**
9 replies were received ranging from £4.00/lb to £8.00/lb.
2007 average = £6.36/lb (2006 = £6.58/lb)

Discussion

These results are compiled from beekeepers owning between 1 and 40 colonies with total yields between 0lbs and 1690lbs. There is a wide variation in reported average honey yields – from 0 to 143 lbs per colony. The average yield (39 lb) is a large decrease over the previous year's figure (51lb) and is mainly contributed to the poor weather in the summer season. This year, for the first time, I received honey surveys indicating that no honey had been collected (6 responses)

As far as sale of honey is concerned, direct sale to customers is the commonest method - 49 respondents provided a figure for this. As usual there is little agreement over price. However, the average price this year has gone down by 20p/lb. It does appear that beekeepers are not charging the price that they could command for selling what I consider to be, a premium product - locally produced honey. Using figures from this survey, an average crop of honey per colony was worth £130.26 when sold direct at average prices. (2006 = £180.54)

18 replies indicated selling honey wholesale to a retailer. Here the figures are helped by a beekeeper who sells into the London market and gains a significantly higher price than most other beekeepers would think is achievable (£10/lb). (Without that figure the remaining 17 replies average at £2.73/lb - range £2.00/lb to £5.00/lb). At average wholesale price, an average crop of honey per colony was worth £122.07 (2006 = £111.18)

3 contributors indicated they sold honey in bulk. Again the London beekeeper made a big difference to the average, selling at £8.50/lb, the other two replies being £2.50 & £2.25/lb (average £2.38). At the average bulk price, an average crop of honey per colony was worth £172.38 (2006 = £67.83). Without the London bias the average bulk price per crop of honey is £92.82

Only 10% of replies indicated selling cut-comb honey. No distinction was made in the questionnaire between wholesale and direct-sale of cut-comb, however, it is thought that the majority of cut-comb is sold direct. As last year, the price doubled between the minimum and maximum prices provided. The price of cut-comb honey is approximately 1.90 times that of extracted honey sold direct. At average cut comb price, an average crop of honey per colony was worth £248.04 (2006 = £335.58)

Overall, direct sales honey prices in 2007 have decreased by approx 5.67% over 2006 (20p), but both the wholesale and bulk honey prices have increased significantly, even without the London influence, by approx 25% & 79% respectively.

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