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THE 1940 CANADIAN HONEY CROP

Ottawa, December 16, 1940.- The Dominion Bureau of Statistics in cooperation with the Dominion and Provincial Departments of Agriculture issues today a preliminary report on honey production in Canada in 1940.

SUMMARY

The first estimate of the 1940 honey crop shows a total production of 22,633,400 pounds. This is 21.6 per cent smaller than the 1939 crop of 28,873,100 pounds and 23 per cent smaller than the average production of the previous five years. Although production was curtailed by unfavourable weather conditions, the crop on the whole is of fair quality. A large proportion of the crop has already been marketed at prices averaging 2 to 3 cents higher than for the 1939 crop and prospects are that the entire supply will be disposed of before the 1941 crop comes on the market.

Production

The first estimate of the total Canadian honey production in 1940 shows a crop of 22,633,400 pounds as compared with the revised estimate of 28,873,100 pounds in 1939, a decrease of 6,239,700 pounds or 21.6 per cent. This is a crop 15 per cent smaller than the 10-year (1929-38) average production of 26,613,600 pounds and 23 per cent lower than the 5-year (1934-38) average of 29,384,400 pounds.

Production was lower in all of the central and Prairie Provinces, which are the chief producing areas. The Ontario crop, which comprises 42 per cent of the total Canadian production, is estimated at 9.5 million pounds which is 2.0 million pounds or 17 per cent lower than the 1939 crop of 11.5 million pounds. The sharpest decline in production was in Quebec where production was only half that of the previous year. The Manitoba crop was 30 per cent smaller than the 1939 crop. On the other hand, there were increases in British Columbia and in the Maritime Provinces of approximately 26 per cent compared with production in the previous year.

The distribution of the 1940 honey production in pounds, by provinces, in order of magnitude, follows, with the revised estimates for 1939 within brackets: Ontario 9,500,000 (11,500,000); Manitoba 3,767,500 (5,400,000); Saskatchewan 3,682,000 (4,262,600); Quebec 2,200,000 (4,355,400); Alberta 2,002,000 (2,178,000); British Columbia 1,264,000 (1,004,900); New Brunswick 124,000 (82,800); Nova Scotia 75,000 (77,000); Prince Edward Island 18,900 (12,400).

Comparative data for the ten-year period 1931 to 1940 are shown in the tables which follows

Table 1.

Total Production of Honey in Canada, 1931 to 1940.

	Pounds
1931	25,106,400
1932	21,169,300
1933	25,287,800
1934	27,062,800
1935	26,814,800
1936	31,938,100
1937	23,196,600
1938	37,909,900
1939	28,873,100 1/
1940	22,633,400 2/
Ten-year average 1929-38	26,613,600
Five-year average 1934-38	29,384,400

1/ Revised, November 1940.

2/ Preliminary, November 1940.

Table 2.

Preliminary Estimates of Canadian Honey Production, by Provinces, 1940 as compared with Revised Estimates for 1939.

Province	1939	1940	Increase (+) or Decrease (-) compared with 1939	Percentage Change from 1939
	lb.	lb.	lb.	p.c.
Prince Edward Island ...	12,400	18,900	+ 6,500	+ 52.4
Nova Scotia	77,000	75,000	- 2,000	- 2.6
New Brunswick	82,800	124,000	+ 41,200	+ 49.8
Quebec	4,355,400	2,200,000	- 2,155,400	- 49.5
Ontario	11,500,000	9,500,000	- 2,000,000	- 17.4
Manitoba	5,400,000	3,767,500	- 1,632,500	- 30.2
Saskatchewan	4,262,600	3,682,000	- 580,600	- 13.6
Alberta	2,178,000	2,002,000	- 176,000	- 8.1
British Columbia	1,004,900	1,264,000	+ 259,100	+ 25.8
CANADA	28,873,100	22,633,400	- 6,239,700	- 21.6

The 1940 Honey Crop Season

Maritime Provinces.- Colonies came through the winter in good condition and in spite of a backward spring were strong at the beginning of the main flow. There was an abundance of clover, and seasonal conditions were favourable up to August 1. Bees gathered little surplus after that date due to dry period followed by cold, wet weather. The quality of the crop was generally excellent, density and flavour were good and colour mostly light to medium amber.

Ontario.- Heavy winter losses and a wet summer resulted in a smaller crop of lower quality. The flavour of the honey was generally good but colour was below average and moisture content high.

Manitoba.- Unfavourable climatic conditions and failure of the sweet clover crop caused by weevil resulted in a honey crop considerably below average. Density is normal, but quality and flavour are extremely uneven, the poorest honey coming from districts where the sweet clover crop was a failure.

Saskatchewan.- Colonies built up well in the spring in the southern half of the province but dry weather resulted in an almost total crop failure. In the north, although dry weather retarded the building up of the colonies and the main honey flow came on with bees slightly weaker than usual the honey flow was excellent and good crops were secured. The average production per colony is down sharply from last year but the quality is well above average and most of the honey graded Water-white. Although an unusually high moisture content showed up in occasional samples, the moisture content for the whole crop would be less than 16.5 per cent.

Alberta.- On the whole the season was a poor one for the beekeepers. The crop was most seriously affected by inclement weather during July followed by a very dry August and this curtailed the late flow. The southern Alberta crop graded Water-white as usual, but somewhat more golden honey than normal was in evidence in some districts producing smaller surpluses in northern Alberta. The honey is of excellent flavour, and the density is rather higher than average, the moisture content varying from 14.6 to 16.5 per cent.

British Columbia.- The weather conditions during the winter of 1939-40 were very favourable to bees, just cold enough, most of the time, to keep them well clustered, but occasionally becoming warm enough to allow the bees a necessary cleansing flight. The consumption of winter store was consequently light. The unusually fine weather of February and March brought the bees out in full activity and brood rearing began in earnest as soon as the first nectar was available from the willows. There were the usual losses from colonies where insufficient stores were left for wintering, or rather, spring brood rearing, the heaviest losses in this respect being on Vancouver Island district. The total winter mortality for the province was less than 15 per cent. With the advent of the honey flow from dandelions and fruit bloom, colonies quickly built up to storing strength.

The continued fine weather, although ideal for bee flight and for a time for honey secretion, was not ideal during the main honey flow occurring in July from the clovers. Conditions were exceedingly dry in July and August and at no time did the bees make any appreciable gains on the scale hives. However, the flow was continuous with a gain of from two to three pounds a day over a period of six weeks, gradually tapering off toward the middle of August when the honey flow ceased,

Condition of Bees Going into Winter Quarters and Crop Outlook for 1941

Maritime Provinces.- Brood rearing was retarded by absence of fall flow and colonies were lighter due to lack of stores. The condition of bees going into winter quarters was reported good in New Brunswick and only fair in Nova Scotia. There was a good fall stand of clover in the new meadows in Prince Edward Island, and should this come through the winter in good condition, plenty of bee pasture is assured.

Ontario.- The bees have gone into winter quarters in good condition but in many districts are short of supplies. Crop prospects for 1941 are very good in most districts.

Manitoba.- More bees will be wintered than usual as the open fall gave plenty of time to prepare for winter. Prospects for 1941 honey crop are reported good.

Saskatchewan.- Bees have gone into winter quarters in good condition with ample supplies in most cases and it is anticipated that they will winter satisfactorily. More than usual rainfall during the past fall gave clover a good growth in most districts before the freeze-up. Prospects for next season's production are therefore good.

Alberta.- Only a small percentage of colonies are kept over winter in Alberta and these are not in the best of condition owing to the lack of stores resulting from early cessation of the nectar flow. Clover and alfalfa seedings have set well and crop prospects are normal for 1941.

British Columbia.- Bees have gone into winter in normal conditions with adequate feed supplies. Prospects for 1941 are normal in so far as they can be anticipated at this date.

Prices and Marketing

By the end of November, 75 per cent of the 1940 crop produced in the Maritime Provinces had been sold at prices averaging about the same as in 1939 in New Brunswick, and 2 to 3 cents per pound higher in Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia. Local demand is good and no difficulty is anticipated in disposing of the balance of the crop.

A large proportion of the Ontario crop was marketed during the three months August-November at prices almost double those received during the corresponding three-month period in 1939 as at that time there was an embargo on honey shipments to England. Prospects are that the entire crop will be sold at a fair price before the 1941 crop comes on the market.

The Manitoba crop is practically all out of the producers' hands and the market outlook, both domestic and export is the best in years. The entire Saskatchewan crop has been marketed at an average price to the producer of 7.9 cents per pound. Seventy-five per cent of the Alberta crop was marketed by November 1 at prices to producers averaging 3 cents per pound higher than in 1939. Although the increased price has slowed up sales on the domestic market, in view of the short Canadian crop, there are good prospects that the entire supply will be disposed of before the 1941 crop is extracted.

About 70 per cent of the British Columbia production sold at an advanced price of 1 to 2 cents per pound, with prospects for a rising domestic market.

Canadian Honey in the United Kingdom Market

At the outbreak of war in September 1939, honey was placed on the luxury list of products which could be imported into the United Kingdom only under licence. To conserve sterling exchange, licences were refused for Canadian honey. This embargo was removed in November, following which substantial shipments of Canadian honey entered the United Kingdom under an open general licence. In June 1940, the British Ministry of Food decreed that individual import permits would be required for all honey imported, and as from October 7, fixed the maximum price for Canadian bulk honey at 65/- per cwt. c.i.f. (equivalent to approximately 13 cents per pound Canadian at current official rates).

The Ministry also agreed to issue import licences to cover approximately 4.5 million pounds of Canadian honey. This generous quota was based on imports of Canadian honey for the crop year immediately preceding the war, that is, the year ended August 31, 1939. Assurance from the Importers Association in the United Kingdom that they are anxious to cooperate with Canadian shippers at prices well up to the fixed maximum should ensure favourable returns to the Canadian honey producer, provided adequate shipping space can be secured.

Exports and Imports

Exports of honey during the crop year ended July 31, 1940 totalled 10,046,022 pounds of which 93 per cent went to the United Kingdom. These exports were almost double the 5,511,988 pounds exported during the previous twelve months. Imports during the same periods totalled 1,335,043 pounds in 1940 and 35,510 pounds in 1939. Increased exports to the United Kingdom created a shortage of local supplies which accounts for the sharp increase in imports from the United States.

Exports during the three months August-October 1940 amounted to 1,970,555 pounds as compared with only 472,241 pounds in the corresponding period in 1939. Imports during the same periods were 370,583 pounds in 1940 compared with 8,611 pounds in 1939. Imports during August-October 1940 were all from the United States, and exports were practically all to the United Kingdom.

Table 3.

Exports of Honey from Canada, for the Crop Years ended July 31, 1936 to 1940.

Year ended July 31	Quantity	Value
	lb.	$
1936	2,228,429	170,019
1937	2,668,581	225,387
1938	2,842,923	240,539
1939	5,511,988	413,112
1940	10,046,022	1,080,543

Table 4.

Imports of Honey into Canada for the Crop Years ended July 31, 1936 to 1940.

Year ended July 31	Quantity	Value
	lb.	$
1936	29,744	2,365
1937	32,510	3,790
1938	131,059	12,661
1939	35,510	4,880
1940	1,335,043	79,539

The United States Honey Report

The semi-monthly honey report issued by the United States Department of Agriculture on December 2, reads in part as follows:-

"The condition of nectar-bearing plants is superior to that of a year ago and with the ground well soaked with moisture, prospects for a good nectar flow in 1941 appear encouraging. In most areas also bees are in better condition than they were a year ago at the beginning of the winter period.

"Honey continues to move unusually rapidly over most of the country, and commercial beekeepers in many sections already report sharply depleted stocks. The market price in North Central States has strengthened due to increased sales of honey to Canada, but elsewhere the market is only steady. Nevertheless there appears to be an undercurrent of strength to the market tone, based upon the light supply of honey at this time as compared with that of a year ago, the increased demand from Canada, and the generally improved market situation for many commodities."