



New York State Beekeeper Tech Team *2021 Info Sheet*

About the NYS Beekeeper Tech Team

In response to growing concern about pollinator declines across the state, the New York State (NYS) Pollinator Protection Plan announced the development of a NYS Beekeeper Tech Team in 2016. The Tech Team is an interdisciplinary group of professionals that provides colony inspection, parasite analysis, and pesticide testing services to hobbyist, sideliners and commercial beekeepers in NYS. Its mission is to improve honey bee health, reduce colony losses, and increase the profitability of the beekeeping industry. Funding for Tech Team services comes from the NYS Environmental Protection Fund. All services are free of charge to the beekeeper.

Tech Team Services

1. Colony Monitoring

The Tech Team inspects colonies and collects samples from participating beekeepers to test for *Varroa*, *Nosema*, and pesticides. Samples are collected twice a year, in spring and late summer. The number of colonies sampled depends on operation size:

- 4 colony samples from one bee yard for operations with 1 - 299 colonies
- 20 colony samples from two bee yards (10/yard) for operations with 300 or more colonies

2. Individualized Inspection Reports

After each sampling date, beekeepers receive customized colony health reports showing the *Varroa*, *Nosema*, and pesticide levels for each sampled colony. The reports also compare results from each individual beekeeper's operation with other similar-sized operations.

3. Tech Team Summary Report

Tech Team program participants complete a management survey in October. Survey data are analyzed to better understand trends in management practices across the state, and to identify relationships between management practices and colony health. Results are presented in an annual report, which is mailed to all Tech Team participants and made available to the public.

4. Annual Consultation

The Tech Team members will meet with each beekeeper in early spring to review the Tech Team Summary Report from the previous year and to discuss individual goals and recommendations for the operation.

5. Business Analysis [The FABB program is not available in 2021]

Participants receive additional business development support from our Agricultural Economist by completing a business analysis.

Selection of Program Participants

Tech Team services are available to beekeepers who maintain colonies in New York State and who generate at least \$1,000 in annual revenue from beekeeping. The priority is to enroll beekeepers seeking help overcoming disease and health issues in their operation. The Tech Team aims to have commercial operations representing at least one third of participants. All remaining beekeepers are enrolled in the Tech Team on a first-come, first-served basis. The Tech Team services are open to hobbyist, sideliner, and commercial beekeepers.

Confidentiality

All data collected through colony sampling and beekeeper surveys will be kept strictly confidential. Data will be stored on password-protected servers at Cornell University. Colony health data will be used to generate beekeeper reports that compare parasite and pathogen levels across operations. Aggregate colony health data and survey data will be used to produce publications for general audiences, including the annual Tech Team Summary Report and articles for academic journals. Data collected in the business survey will be used to develop a benchmarking tool that will allow beekeepers to compare their own costs and revenues to an industry average. Published articles and reports will not contain any identifying information that would allow the data to be linked to individual operations.

Tech Team Members

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