

Review of the work and dissemination of findings of the COLOSS monitoring group in 2016

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The network of countries participating in monitoring of colony losses remains strong. In 2016, 29 countries sent data from their monitoring survey to the international data co-ordinator for inclusion in the data analysis. Turkey and Belgium both contributed data once more after a few years of absence, and Wales provided data from a new survey. Several avenues were pursued in 2016 for publishing the results of the COLOSS annual colony winter loss survey. A press release with preliminary results for winter 2015 - 16 was issued in late July 2016, as has been done for several years. This attracts considerable international attention through the media and the internet. A new initiative was started in 2016, to establish an annual series of jointly authored short papers to be submitted in late summer/early autumn. These would present winter loss rates from countries submitting data returns in the requested form to the data co-ordinator by the specified deadline for that year's survey. The first paper, entitled "Preliminary analysis of loss rates of honey bee colonies during winter 2015/16 from the COLOSS survey", appeared in the Journal of Apicultural Research online in December 2016 and has already been widely read. In future a press release is likely to follow rather than precede this annual paper. Discussion at and prior to the COLOSS conference in September 2016 in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, proposed use of data collected on varroa treatment as part of the monitoring questionnaire, not as a potential explanatory factor in winter losses but in a descriptive analysis comparing beekeeper practice in participating countries. This analysis is underway at the time of writing. The results will also be of interest to the COLOSS varroa group. Two further papers are still in preparation. One is a modelling - based paper on risk of winter loss, covering a period of 5 years and incorporating both varroa treatment factors and environmental variables, and another is a descriptive paper presenting loss rates over time and space, for the study of patterns of losses. A ResearchGate collaborative project was set up in late December 2016 by Robert Brodschneider, entitled "COLOSS monitoring of honey bee colony losses", as a means of enhancing visibility of the work of the monitoring group, and also for attracting interest from potential national co-ordinators in countries not yet represented in the group. In just over a month, this has already gained more than 50 followers.

Accepted manuscript of the following research output: Gray, A., & Brodschneider, R. (2017). *Review of the work and dissemination of findings of the COLOSS monitoring group in 2016*. 12-12. Abstract from COLOSS Monitoring group Workshop, Zadar, Croatia, 1-2 February, 2017, Zadar, Croatia.