

Weekly Reader News

- [This Week's Story](#)
- [News Update Archive](#)

This Week's News for Kids

Plight of the Honeybee

As the honeybee population drops, farmers fear a loss of crops.

Researchers are scrambling to solve a honeybee mystery. Tens of thousands of honeybees in 24 states across the United States are vanishing from their hives and dying in the fields. A typical healthy colony contains between 40,000 and 60,000 bees. Some beekeepers have lost more than half of their colonies.

"We've had dramatic losses," honeybee expert Jerry Hayes of the Florida Department of Agriculture told *Weekly Reader*. "Some commercial beekeepers may have lost thousands of colonies."

The situation is threatening more than honey **production**. Farmers rely on honeybees to **pollinate** many crops, from almonds to cucumbers to blueberries. The bee loss may affect crop production.

"One third of the food you and I eat every day can be traced back to honeybees," says Hayes. "If the honeybees aren't there, the grower doesn't have any options. If you don't have honeybees to carry pollen from one crop to another, you get zero crops."

Racing to Solve the Case

The cause of the honeybee loss is currently unknown. Researchers are looking into several possibilities, including viruses, poor nutrition, and **pesticides**. Until the cause is found, they are calling the **syndrome** "Colony Collapse Disorder."

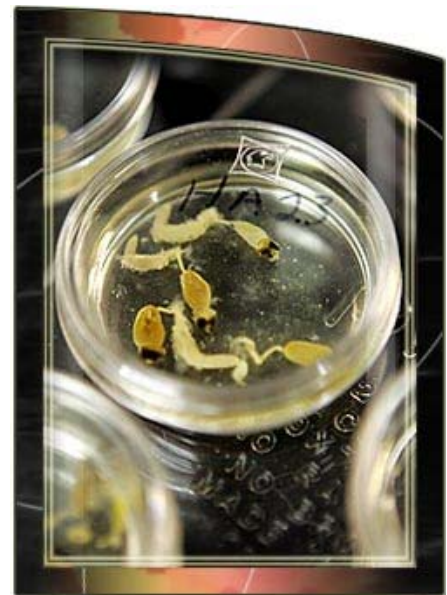
"The disorder may be a combination of factors acting together," explains Hayes. "After we find the cause, we can give recommendations to the beekeeping industry."

Until the cause is found, Colony Collapse Disorder continues to threaten crops. That may mean consumers could soon feel the effects. "Honeybees are a **vital** link in the food chain—from a farmer's production of fruits and vegetables to your table," says Hayes. "Without honeybees, that link is broken."

Links

- View a [map of the states affected](#) by Colony Collapse Disorder.
- Check out this [animated look into a bee hive](#) (requires Macromedia Flash plug-in).

Word Search



Bee dissections like these are being studied in labs.

SUBSCRIBE

RENEW

WEEKLY READER STORE

- Buzz over [here](#) for our honeybee word search!

[Back to Top](#)



[Add to del.icio.us](#)



[Subscribe Now](#)

© Copyright 2010 Weekly Reader Corporation. All Rights Reserved. Trademarks and logos are property of Weekly Reader Corporation.

[Subscribe/Renew](#) | [Weekly Reader Store](#) | [Custom Publishing](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Customer Service/HELP](#) | [About Us](#) | [Careers](#) |  [RSS](#)