



## Beekeeping in Bulgaria 2024

The number of bee colonies on October the 1, 2024 is 838 thousand, which is 2.6% more than in 2023. The bee colonies, used for the production of honey in 2024 increased by 5.5% and amounted to 695 thousand. The honey production is 10 440 tons, or 6.7% less compared to 2023. The average production from one bee colony is 15.0 kg. The number of bee colonies in the Severozapaden region increased 4.6%, in the Severen tsentralen region 3.9% and in the Yugoiztochen region 4.6%. In the Yugozapaden region and Yuzhen tsentralen region the increase of the number of bee colonies is under 2%.

During the year of observation, 55.7 tons of beewax and over 27.7 tons of bee pollen are produced.

The number of holdings breeding bee colonies decreased to 8 923 (-5.4%) in 2024. Holdings with over 150 and more bee colonies increased by 1.2%, these with 50-149 bee colonies increased by 4.8%.

More than 34 thousand bee colonies in total died in 2024.

For 2024, 6 992 tons of honey are sold to processors, 2 248 tons are sold directly, 470 tons to retailers, 744 tons to the industry, and 1 410 tons are for own consumption.

Table 1

Beekeeping holdings, bee colonies and honey production by statistical regions in 2024						
Statistical zones (NUTS 1) and statistical regions (NUTS 2)	Beekeeping holdings 01.10.2024	Bee colonies 01.10.2024	Bee colonies, used for the production of honey	Average number of bee colonies	Honey production	Average honey production per a bee colony
	(number)	(number)	(number)	(number)	(number)	(kg)
<b>Bulgaria</b>	<b>8 923</b>	<b>838 038</b>	<b>695 244</b>	<b>93.9</b>	<b>10 440</b>	<b>15.0</b>
<b>Severna i Yugoiztochna Bulgaria</b>	<b>6 761</b>	<b>699 185</b>	<b>585 690</b>	<b>103.4</b>	<b>9 280</b>	<b>15.8</b>
Severozapaden	1 854	130 316	113 771	70.2	1 871	16.4
Severen tsentralen	1 364	193 981	165 774	142.2	2 644	16.0
Severoiztochen	1 749	192 792	159 183	110.2	2 611	16.4
Yugoiztochen	1 794	182 096	146 962	101.	2 154	14.7
<b>Yugozapadna i Yuzhna tsentralna Bulgaria</b>	<b>2 162</b>	<b>138 853</b>	<b>109 554</b>	<b>64.2</b>	<b>1 160</b>	<b>10.6</b>
Yugozapaden	734	40 593	32 911	55.3	339	10.3
Yuzhen tsentralen	1 428	98 260	76 643	68.8	821	10.7

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food (MAF), Agrostatics Department, Survey Beekeeping in Bulgaria

Table 2

Destroyed bee colonies and losses caused by various factors in 2024 by statistical regions						
Statistical zones (NUTS 1) and statistical regions (NUTS 2)	Destroyed Bee colonies	Of which				Change 2024/2023
		By poisoning	By diseases	By hunger	Other reasons	
	(number)	(number)	(number)	(number)	(number)	(%)
<b>Bulgaria</b>	<b>34 603</b>	<b>6 930</b>	<b>5 906</b>	<b>5 431</b>	<b>16 336</b>	<b>-15.0%</b>
<b>Severna i Yugoiztochna Bulgaria</b>	<b>27 150</b>	<b>6 201</b>	<b>4 234</b>	<b>4 299</b>	<b>12 416</b>	<b>-21.7%</b>
Severozapaden	3 152	1 035	249	433	1 435	-36.2%
Severen tsentralen	4 908	1 535	492	1 428	1 453	0.5%
Severoiztochen	7 436	1 317	2 492	1 688	1 939	1.8%
Yugoiztochen	11 654	2 314	1 001	750	7 589	-33.6%
<b>Yugozapadna i Yuzhna tsentralna Bulgaria</b>	<b>7 453</b>	<b>729</b>	<b>1 672</b>	<b>1 132</b>	<b>3 920</b>	<b>23.5%</b>
Yugozapaden	1 286	135	39	178	934	-15.8%
Yuzhen tsentralen	6 167	594	1 633	954	2 986	36.9%

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food (MAF), Agrostatics Department, Survey Beekeeping in Bulgaria

## Results and analyses

Table 3

Beekeeping holdings by statistical regions in 2023 and 2024						
Statistical zones (NUTS 1) and statistical regions (NUTS 2)	Beekeeping colonies at 1.10.2023	Beekeeping colonies at 1.10.2024	Change 2024/2023	Bee colonies, used for the production of honey in 2023	Bee colonies, used for the production of honey in 2024	Change 2024/2023
	(number)	(number)	(%)	(number)	(number)	%
<b>Bulgaria</b>	<b>816 673</b>	<b>838 038</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>659 002</b>	<b>695 244</b>	<b>5.5%</b>
<b>Severna i Yugoiztochna Bulgaria</b>	<b>680 126</b>	<b>699 185</b>	<b>2.8%</b>	<b>553 888</b>	<b>585 690</b>	<b>5.7%</b>
Severozapaden	124 633	130 316	4.6%	105 682	113 771	7.7%
Severen tsentralen	186 672	193 981	3.9%	157 354	165 774	5.4%
Severoiztochen	194 658	192 792	-1.0%	152 235	159 183	4.6%
Yugoiztochen	174 163	182 096	4.6%	138 617	146 962	6.0%
<b>Yugozapadna i Yuzhna tsentralna Bulgaria</b>	<b>136 547</b>	<b>138 853</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>105 114</b>	<b>109 554</b>	<b>4.2%</b>
Yugozapaden	39 990	40 593	1.5%	32 929	32 911	-0.1%
Yuzhen tsentralen	96 557	98 260	1.8%	72 185	76 643	6.2%

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food (MAF), Agrostistics Department, Survey Beekeeping in Bulgaria

Figure 1. Bee colonies (number)

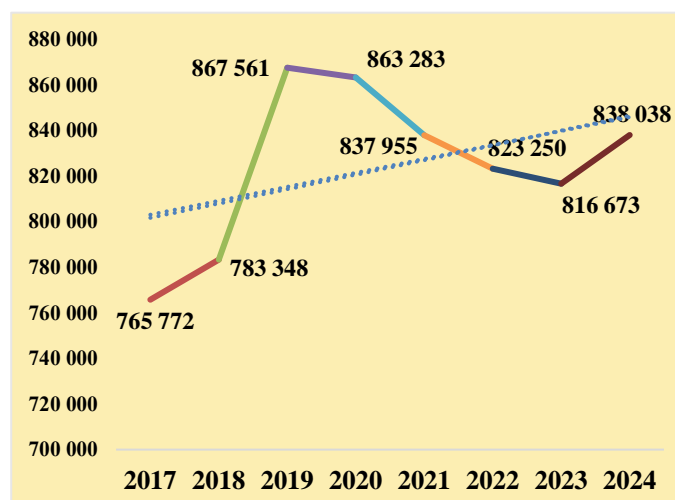
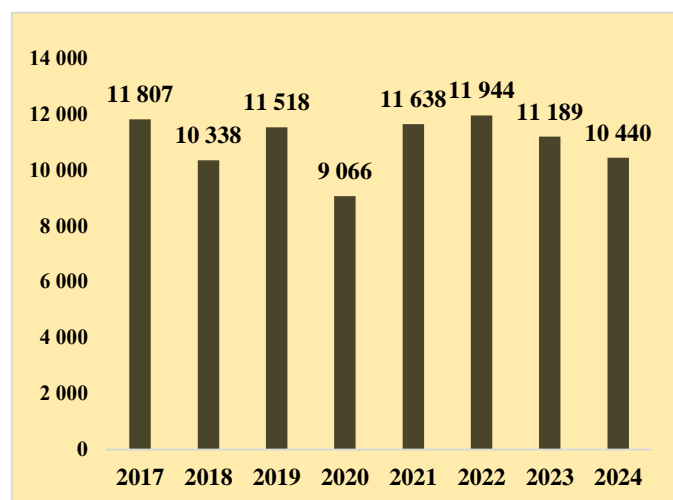


Figure 2. Honey production (tones) in Bulgaria



Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostistics Department, Survey Beekeeping in Bulgaria

Table 4

Holdings by number of bee colonies									
Number of bee colonies in a holding	Holdings at 1 <sup>st</sup> October			Bee colonies at 1 <sup>st</sup> October			Average number of bee colonies		
	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023
	(number)	(number)	(%)	(number)	(number)	(%)	(number)	(number)	(%)
1 to 9	949	804	-15.3%	4 108	3 526	-14.2%	4.3	4.4	2.3%
10 to 49	3 136	2 595	-17.3%	73 792	61 404	-16.8%	23.5	23.7	0.9%
50 to 149	3 112	3 261	4.8%	277 730	296 921	6.9%	89.2	91.1	2.1%
150 and more	2 236	2 263	1.2%	461 043	476 187	3.3%	206.2	210.4	2.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9 433</b>	<b>8 923</b>	<b>-5.4%</b>	<b>816 673</b>	<b>838 038</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>86.6</b>	<b>93.9</b>	<b>8.5%</b>

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostistics Department, Survey Beekeeping in Bulgaria

Table 5

Distribution of honey and average selling prices (ASP)					
Market distribution	Amount of bee honey sold in 2023	Average price* 2023	Amount of bee honey sold in 2024	Average price* 2024	Change of the average price 2024/2023
	(tones)	(BGN/kg)	(tones)	(BGN/kg)	(%)
Direct sales to end users	2 392	8.96	2 248	8.90	-0.7%
Direct sales to retailers	483	7.44	470	7.78	4.6%
Sales to processors	4 870	4.69	6 992	4.40	-6.2%
Sales to the industry	870	4.36	744	4.23	-3.0%
Total sales	8 615	6.00	10 454	5.51	-8.2%
For own consumption and bee feeding	1 431	-	1 410	-	-

\*VAT excl.

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostistics Department, Survey Beekeeping in Bulgaria

Figure 3. Bee colonies holdings (number)

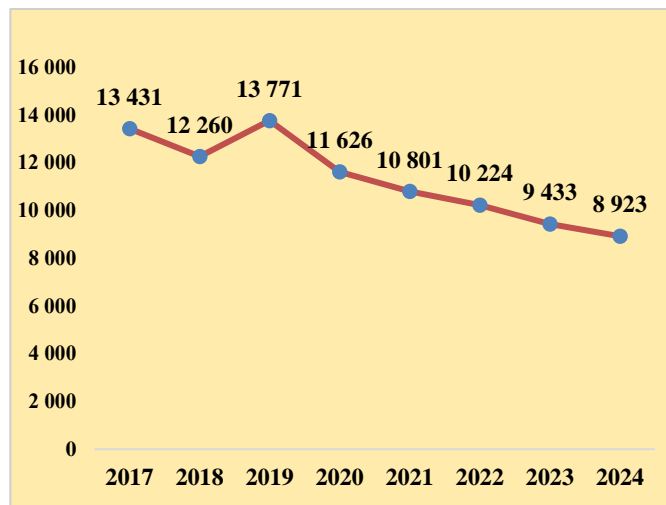
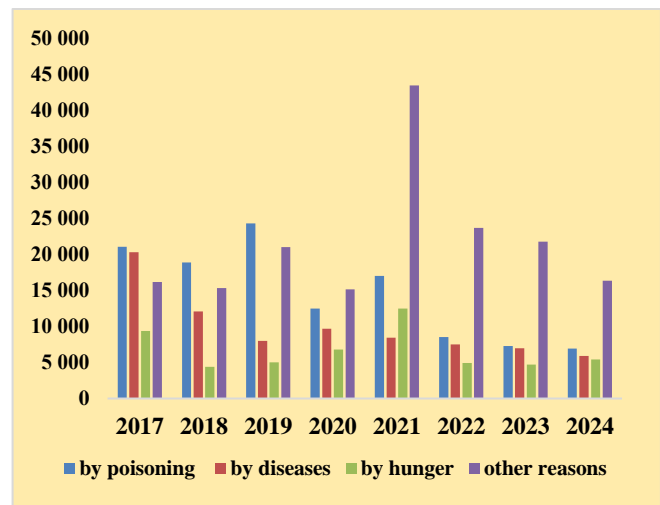


Figure 4. Destroyed bee colonies (number)



Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostistics Department, Survey Beekeeping in Bulgaria

Table 6

Preventive measures and bee colonies feeding in 2023 and 2024						
Measures	2023		2024		Change 2024/2023	
	Bee colonies	Average costs for one bee colony	Bee colonies	Average costs for one bee colony	Bee colonies	Average costs for one bee colony
	(number)	(BGN)	(number)	(BGN)	(%)	(%)
Treatment against varroaosis	804 160	6.54	820 793	6.26	2.1%	-4.3%
Autumn feeding	543 072	9.70	545 594	8.99	0.5%	-7.3%
Winter feeding	494 963	9.46	499 191	8.74	0.9%	-7.6%
Spring feeding	566 773	9.91	555 350	9.13	-2.0%	-7.9%
Other costs	679 009	17.60	723 767	16.37	6.6%	-7.0%

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostistics Department, Survey Beekeeping in Bulgaria

Table 7

Storage of honey and storage value (including transport and storage costs)					
Type of storage container	Storage value			Relative share of holdings using storage containers by type	
	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023	2023	2024
	(BGN/kg)	(BGN/kg)	(%)	(%)	(%)
In tins	0.49	0.48	-2.0%	76.8%	75.5%
Glass jars	0.91	1.20	31.9%	48.7%	51.6%
In plastic packaging	0.87	0.82	-5.7%	3.5%	3.9%
Other packaging	0.93	0.64	-31.2%	1.2%	1.2%

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostistics Department, Survey Beekeeping in Bulgaria

Table 8

Mobile beekeeping				
Characteristics	(units)	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023 (%)
Bee colonies, involved in mobile beekeeping	(number)	21 407	19 323	-9.7%
Holdings, practicing mobile beekeeping	(number)	265	193	-27.2%
Value of transport costs and veterinary certificates	(BGN/bee colony)	14.18	14.00	-1.3%

*Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostistics Department, Survey Beekeeping in Bulgaria*

In 2024, 16 holdings with 5 605 bee colonies indicated that they had 26 agreements (written or verbal) with farmers for crop pollination.

### Methodological notes

The survey purpose is to determine the number of bee colonies on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024, the honey production in 2024, the sale and average prices (VAT excl.) of the sold honey, the main costs of the production and storage of bee honey, the number of destroyed bee colonies in 2024 and the reasons for their destruction. The survey data is used for analyses and programs for the sector, as well as to make management decisions in the implementation of agrarian policy in beekeeping. The legal basis for the statistical survey is the National Statistical Program for 2024. The results of the conducted survey are in accordance with the requirements of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/1475 for determining detailed rules for the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council regarding the assessment of CAP strategic plans and the submission of information on monitoring and evaluation. The used definitions in the survey are those specified in the cited regulations.

#### Surveyed Statistical indicators:

1. Holdings raising bee colonies, bee honey production and sale - number of holdings with bee colonies; number of bee colonies; honey production - tons; average honey production - kg from 1 bee colony; sold honey - tons; prices of sold honey - BGN per kilogram.
2. Distribution of honey production - direct sales to end users, sales to retailers, to processors, to the industry, own consumption by the farmer's household.
3. Indicators for the prevention, production and other costs, related to the bee colonies - value of preventive treatments against varroaosis, costs of bee feeding, number of destroyed bee colonies, mobile beekeeping and honey storage.

**The questionnaire** consists of 22 questions and covers administrative information about the holding, legal status, registration number of the apiary according to Ordinance No. 10 of April 1, 2015 on the conditions for registration and the procedure for identification of bee colonies, number of bee colonies, quantity and sale of honey production, production costs and costs related to the storage of honey.

**Scope, model and volume of the sample** - the sample (stratified and random) is prepared using a list of holdings breeding bee colonies from the Census of agricultural holdings in Bulgaria in 2020 and new holdings created after 2020, information about which is obtained from the farmers' register under Ordinance No. 3/1999. 3 461 holdings breeding bee colonies are surveyed. The organization and control of the survey is carried out by the Agrostistics Department at the Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

**Confidentiality** – the national confidentiality rules are defined in the Statistics Act. According to Art. 25 individual statistical data as well as statistical information that summarizes data for less than three statistical units or for an aggregate in which the relative share of the value of a studied parameter of one unit is over 85 percent of the total value of this parameter for all units of the population cannot be disclosed or provided.

**Accessibility and transparency** - the data on the number of bee colonies, destroyed bee colonies during the year, on the amount of bee honey production and the honey sales are available to users on the website of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food: <http://www.mzh.government.bg/bg/statistika-i-analizi/izsledvane-zhivotnovodstvo/danni/>, in accordance with the deadline established in the National Statistical Program and in the Calendar for the dissemination of the results of the statistical surveys conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

**Distribution of administrative districts by statistical regions (NUTS 2) – Severozapaden:** Vidin, Vratsa, Montana, Lovech, Pleven; **Severententralen:** Veliko Tarnovo, Gabrovo, Ruse, Silistra, Razgrad; **Severoiztochen:** Varna, Dobrich, Targovishte, Shoumen; **Yugoiztochen:** Burgas, Sliven, Stara Zagora, Yambol; **Yugozapaden:** Blagoevgrad, Kyustendil, Pernik, Sofia-cap., Sofia region; **Yuzhen tsentralen:** Kardzhali, Pazardzhik, Plovdiv, Smolyan, Haskovo.

The publication is editorially completed on 25 February 2025

Composition and printing: Ministry of Agriculture and Food

Contacts: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostistics Department

E-mail: [agrostat@mzh.government.bg](mailto:agrostat@mzh.government.bg)

Website of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food:

<http://www.mzh.government.bg>