



JB Pritzker, Governor
Jerry Costello II, Director

Bureau of Land and Water Resources

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July 1, 2026

The Honorable JB Pritzker
Governor of Illinois
Capitol Building
Springfield, Illinois 62706-1150

Dear Governor Pritzker:

In accordance with Section 3 of the Illinois Bees and Apiaries Act [510 ILCS 20/3], the Illinois Department of Agriculture is directed to submit an annual apiary inspection report to the Governor and the Illinois State Beekeepers Association. The report contains the findings of the Department's inspections of apiaries across Illinois on a fiscal year basis.

Please find enclosed the fiscal year 2026 Apiary Inspection Annual Report. Do not hesitate to contact Michelle Curby, Apiary Inspection Supervisor, if there are questions regarding the contents of the report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jerry Costello II'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large 'J' and a prominent 'II' at the end.

Jerry Costello II
Director

Cc: Kristi Jones, IDOA
Jeremy Flynn, IDOA
Tyler Bohannon, IDOA
Lori Harlan, IDOA
IDOA Apiary Inspectors
Mike Mason, ISBA
Steve Petrilli, ISBA
Don Miller, ISBA

Enclosure

Fiscal Year 2026 Apiary Inspection Annual Report
Illinois Department of Agriculture
(July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026)

The Illinois Department of Agriculture (Department) administers the Illinois Bees and Apiaries Act (Act). Department Apiary Inspectors examine honey bee colonies around the state for the issuance of moving permits, to monitor the health of the bee population, to help prevent the spread of diseases and pests of the honey bee and to provide advice on general honey bee management.

Beekeeping in Illinois continues to be a hobbyist endeavor with almost 89% of the beekeepers managing 10 colonies or less (Table 1). Thirty-one (31) beekeepers maintain 100 or more colonies in the state.

Beekeepers are required to register with the Department. As of the end of Fiscal Year 2026, 5,505 beekeepers were managing 39,251 colonies in 7,138 apiaries in Illinois (Table 2). The number of registered beekeepers has increased from last year's total of 5,423. Four hundred eighteen (418) beekeepers were newly registered during the fiscal year. Table 3 lists the number of colonies and apiaries registered in each county in Illinois. Lake County had the highest number of colonies with 3,108. Will County and Cook County placed second and third, with 2,842 and 2,614 colonies, respectively.

Colony inspection statistics for Fiscal Year 2026 and several previous years are included in Table 4. From July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026, 595 apiaries containing 6,407 colonies were visited. Of these colonies, 4,285 were actually opened and inspected. American Foulbrood Disease (AFB) was suspected in 22 colonies and confirmed in 16. The number of colonies infected with European Foulbrood (EFB) was 85 which was a decrease from 91 in Fiscal Year 2025, and Chalkbrood increased from 1 colony in Fiscal Year 2025 to 6 colonies in Fiscal Year 2026.

Varroa mites continue to be found throughout the state. Inspection reports during the fiscal year indicated an increase in varroa mite levels as compared to last fiscal year. This may be due in part to the randomness of inspections, the time of year inspections were made, or environmental conditions.

Reports from around the state indicated colony losses following the winter weather affected most beekeepers to some degree. Some lost most, or all, of their colonies, while some beekeepers had a minor loss. Also, interest in colonies for pollination continues to increase due to the lack of feral colonies and the realization of the importance of honey bee pollination.

Tracheal mites are not listed as a regulated parasite in the Act and its rules. However, examinations for tracheal mites can still be performed when requested. Tracheal mites were not discovered in any colonies in conjunction with Department apiary inspections for Fiscal Year 2026.

The small hive beetle (SHB) continues to be a problem in Illinois. Based on the Department's inspections and input from the industry, the SHB has most likely spread to all Illinois counties. In Fiscal Year 2025, of the colonies inspected, 696 colonies contained the SHB, while in Fiscal Year 2026, 915 colonies had SHB. Beekeepers are using various control methods (e.g., traps, other non-chemical control methods) to manage the beetle.

Samples were collected and sent to the Purdue Bee Lab, the Bee Research Lab in Beltsville, MD, the National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research in Peoria, IL, and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services laboratory for testing depending on suspected disease, pest or nuisance. Abatement of sixteen (16) nuisance hives were coordinated with their respective beekeepers.

The Department and the Illinois State Beekeepers Association continue to encourage active communication between beekeepers and licensed pesticide applicators to reduce honey bee exposure to pesticides (herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, etc.). Although some incidents of exposure have occurred, sometimes with severe consequences, communication efforts are improving.

Licensed pesticide applicators can access contact and location information for Illinois beekeepers through the Department's website via the FieldWatch system, where beekeepers can also register their colonies. The Department encourages pesticide applicators to contact beekeepers well in advance of any application so they can take steps to protect their colonies. Participation is voluntary and cannot fully eliminate the risk of pesticide exposure, but cooperation between applicators and beekeepers can greatly reduce it.

TABLE 1
Distribution of Beekeeper Size in Illinois

Number of Colonies	Number of Beekeepers	Percentage of Beekeepers
0	442	8.01
1-5	3,685	66.79
6-10	750	13.59
11-20	356	6.45
21-50	206	3.73
51-100	47	0.85
101-200	18	0.33
201-300	5	0.09
301-400	4	0.07
401-500	0	0.00
>500	4	0.07

These counts are based on the current Active status and not a specific State Fiscal Year due to the issue of renewals that can take place from Jan 1 through October 1. Also, because newly registered Owners are not required to renew following their first year, the inaccuracy would be compounded.

TABLE 2
Illinois Beekeeper and Colony Statistics

Number of Registered Beekeepers	Number of Apiaries	Number of Colonies	Colonies/Beekeepers	Colonies/Apiaries
5,505	7,138	39,259	7.13	5.50

These counts are based on the current Active status and not a specific State Fiscal Year due to the issue of renewals that can take place from Jan 1 through October 1. Also, because newly registered Owners are not required to renew following their first year, the inaccuracy would be compounded.

TABLE 3
Number of Registered Apiaries and Colonies in Illinois Counties

County	# of Apiaries	# of Colonies
Adams	78	368
Alexander	3	16
Bond	61	270
Boone	44	196
Brown	7	43
Bureau	62	545
Calhoun	14	75
Carroll	22	98
Cass	15	61
Champaign	155	484
Christian	43	193
Clark	51	363
Clay	15	2349
Clinton	88	518
Coles	64	223
Cook	799	2614
Crawford	43	191
Cumberland	23	93
DeKalb	43	181
De Witt	38	257
Douglas	26	112
DuPage	274	978
Edgar	40	124
Edwards	5	28
Effingham	37	207
Fayette	37	256
Ford	29	77
Franklin	42	222
Fulton	48	425
Gallatin	3	9
Greene	22	93

County	# of Apiaries	# of Colonies
Grundy	40	305
Hamilton	17	179
Hancock	36	127
Hardin	4	21
Henderson	23	76
Henry	55	188
Iroquois	53	368
Jackson	83	412
Jasper	29	251
Jefferson	35	202
Jersey	53	216
Jo Daviess	40	194
Johnson	20	260
Kane	210	1403
Kankakee	67	422
Kendall	54	247
Knox	47	192
Lake	503	3108
LaSalle	118	465
Lawrence	20	79
Lee	35	166
Livingston	41	133
Logan	35	142
McDonough	34	125
McHenry	295	1847
McLean	156	844
Macon	72	251
Macoupin	118	370
Madison	260	919
Marion	60	655
Marshall	21	148
Mason	23	120
Massac	11	44
Menard	61	343

County	# of Apiaries	# of Colonies
Mercer	33	251
Monroe	55	271
Montgomery	66	281
Morgan	83	314
Moultrie	24	121
Ogle	56	379
Peoria	171	557
Perry	35	264
Piatt	31	112
Pike	16	90
Pope	11	47
Pulaski	2	3
Putnam	26	164
Randolph	36	151
Richland	29	379
Rock Island	56	259
St. Clair	188	707
Saline	19	186
Sangamon	245	818
Schuyler	15	68
Scott	7	29
Shelby	56	225
Stark	13	34
Stephenson	39	215
Tazewell	102	495
Union	21	129
Vermilion	74	381
Wabash	11	277
Warren	25	68
Washington	31	123
Wayne	31	951
White	12	93
Whiteside	48	245
Will	240	2842

County	# of Apiaries	# of Colonies
Williamson	75	303
Winnebago	118	682
Woodford	77	246

These counts are based on the current Active status and not a specific State Fiscal Year due to the issue of renewals that can take place from Jan 1 through October 1. Also, because newly registered Owners are not required to renew following their first year, the inaccuracy would be compounded.

TABLE 4
Illinois Apiary Inspection Statistics

SFY	# of Apiaries Inspected	Colonies in Apiaries Inspected	# of Colonies Examined	AFB		# of Colonies with EFB	# of Colonies w/Chalk Brood	Varroa Mite		# of Colonies w/Tracheal Mites
				# of Colonies	% of Colonies Examined			# of Colonies	% of Colonies Examined	
2027	0	0	0	0	0.00	0	0	0	0.00	0
2026	596	6,424	4,301	22	0.51	85	6	217	5.05	0
2025	554	4,442	3,290	0	0.00	91	1	106	3.22	0
2024	449	3,753	2,774	10	0.36	85	4	43	1.55	0
2023	781	8,094	3,650	3	0.08	117	2	113	3.10	0
2022	786	8,153	4,162	10	0.24	80	2	222	5.33	0
2021	762	9,280	4,622	2	0.04	101	3	276	5.97	0
2020	873	14,594	7,845	1	0.01	117	20	293	3.73	0
2019	817	15,314	7,413	0	0.00	110	18	540	7.28	0
2018	864	12,178	5,669	7	0.12	74	32	585	10.32	0
2017	633	11,430	5,479	14	0.26	81	4	398	7.26	0