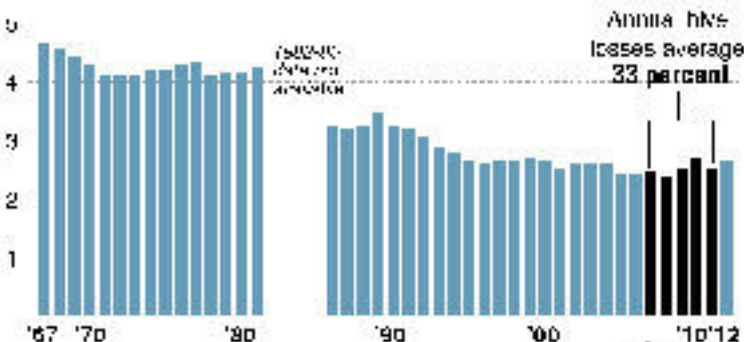


Honey bee colonies decline

Pollination by honey bees is a key part of U.S. agriculture, with their value to crops at \$15 billion each year. In 2006, beekeepers began reporting big losses of their hives. No cause has been found for colony collapse disorder, but several factors are being studied.

Commercially managed colonies, in millions



What could cause colony collapse disorder

Pathogens Fungi and bacteria infect bees, weaken their resistance

Parasites Varroa mites often found in CCD colonies; mites could carry infecting agents

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Graphic by Jody Cobb

Management stress Poor nutrition, overcrowding in hives; bees transported frequently to many locations to pollinate crops

Environmental stress Exposure to pesticides at lethal or sub-lethal levels; less diversity and/or over nutrition in pollen and nectar bees gather for food

