

## Honeybee problem nearing a 'critical point'

Anyone who's been stung by a bee knows they can inflict an outsized pain for such tiny insects. It makes a strange kind of sense, then, that their demise would create an outsized problem for the food system by placing the more than 70 crops they pollinate — from almonds to apples to blueberries — in peril.

Although news about Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) has died down, commercial beekeepers have seen average population losses of about 30 percent each year since 2006, said Paul Towers, of the Pesticide Action Network. Towers was one of the organizers of a conference that brought together beekeepers and environmental groups this week to tackle the challenges facing the beekeeping industry and the agricultural economy by proxy.

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