

Apiary *program*



Overwintering Survey 2013/2014

The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF) has conducted its first survey for overwintering losses of honeybee colonies. The survey was open to any beekeeper in the State of Utah between February and May of 2014; data was collected for the 2013/2014 winter. **The results of this survey are not scientific.** UDAF would like to thank the over 300 participants that took the time to complete this survey.

Methodology

The survey was open from the beginning of February to the first of May in 2014. The questionnaire was created on SurveyMonkey.com and invitations to participate were sent to all registered beekeepers that had provided email contact information to UDAF. Utah’s beekeeping clubs were also contacted and some posted a weblink the survey on their web-sites. Some responses were collected by phone or in person by UDAF staff and entered into the electronic survey.

Four questions were asked in this survey:

- 1) **City where beeyard(s) are located**
- 2) **How many colonies were in your beeyard(s) going into the 2013/2014 winter?**
- 3) **How many colonies died during the 2013/2014 winter?**
- 4) **Were your 2013/2014 winter losses higher, lower or the same as the previous winter?**
- 5) **Are you hives migratory (transported for pollination events) or stationary?**

Results

A total of 303 beekeepers responded to the survey. Beekeepers in the state had an average of 6 colonies going into the 2013/2014 winter; they lost an average of 2 hives during this period (see page 3). A plurality of beekeepers that had bees for more than one year, reported that these losses were lower than in the previous winter (20.6%). Almost 15% of

respondents claimed that their losses for the 2013/2014 winter were the same as in the previous year. Only 12.4% reported that their losses were worse when compared to the previous winter. 52.3% of beekeepers said that they did not have bees in the previous winter (see page 4). The vast majority of respondents (96.1%) report that they do not move their hives to provide pollination services (see page 5).

The cities with the top number of responses were Salt Lake City (31), Orem (17) and West Jordan (15). Cities where beekeepers appeared to have the best overwintering success (when compared to the previous year) included American Fork, Kaysville and Orem. The cities where overwintering kills appeared to increase were Salt Lake City and South Jordan (see Figure 1).

Discussion

The results of the survey would suggest that overwintering success is improving amongst those that responded. A large number of survey participants indicated that they don’t move their colonies for pollination services and didn’t have bees in the previous season. This reflects the growing trend of beekeeping as a hobby and beekeeping as a part-time income source in the State of Utah.

Figure 1: Best and Worst Overwintering by City

If 5 or more beekeepers in a given city reported that they had bees in the previous winter, it was calculated whether their overwintering losses were overall better or worse than in the previous year.

Best

American Fork

5 respondents
100% lower losses

Kaysville

5 respondents
60% lower losses
20% same losses
20% higher losses

Orem

6 respondents
50% lower losses
33% same losses
17% higher losses

Worst

Salt Lake City

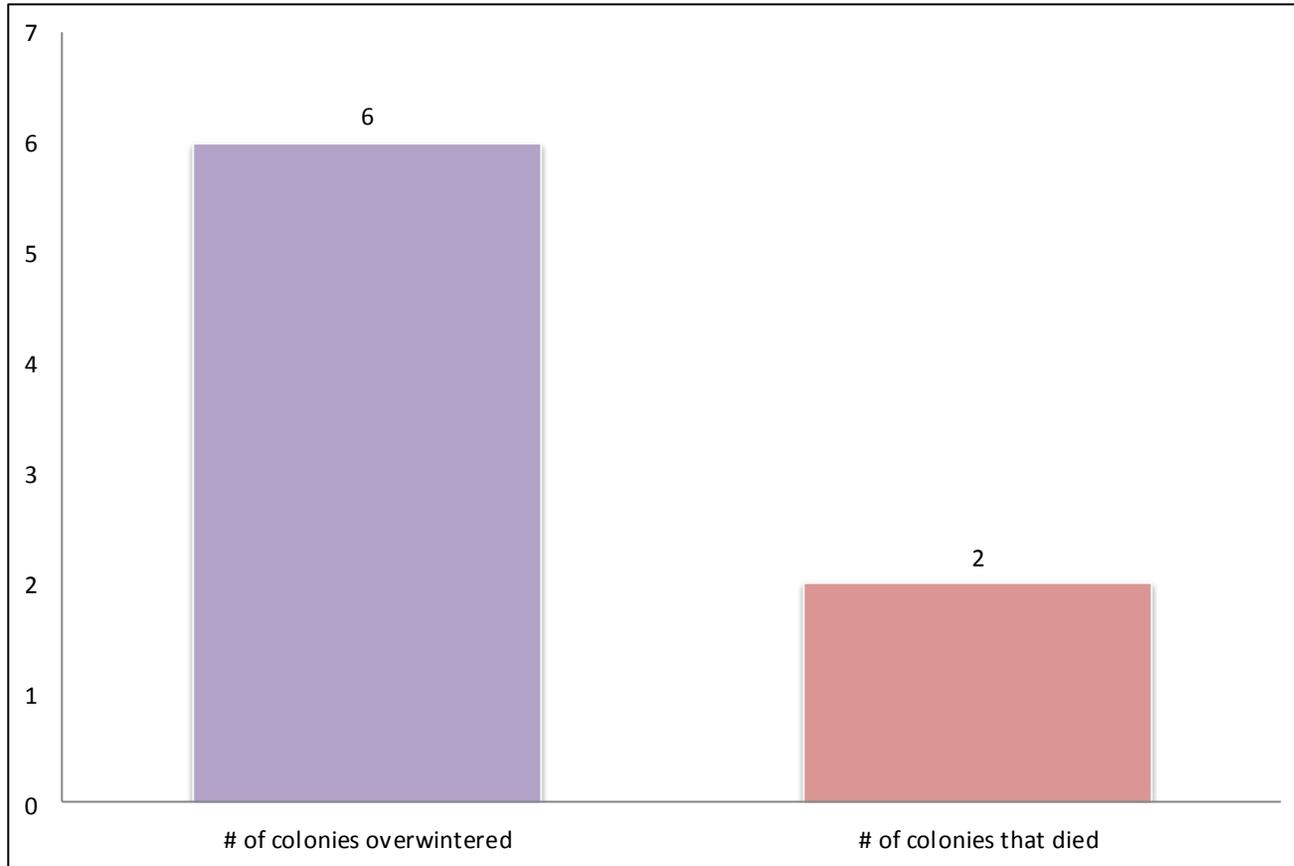
17 respondents
41% higher losses
35% lower losses
24% same losses

South Jordan

9 respondents
33% higher losses
33% lower losses
33% same losses

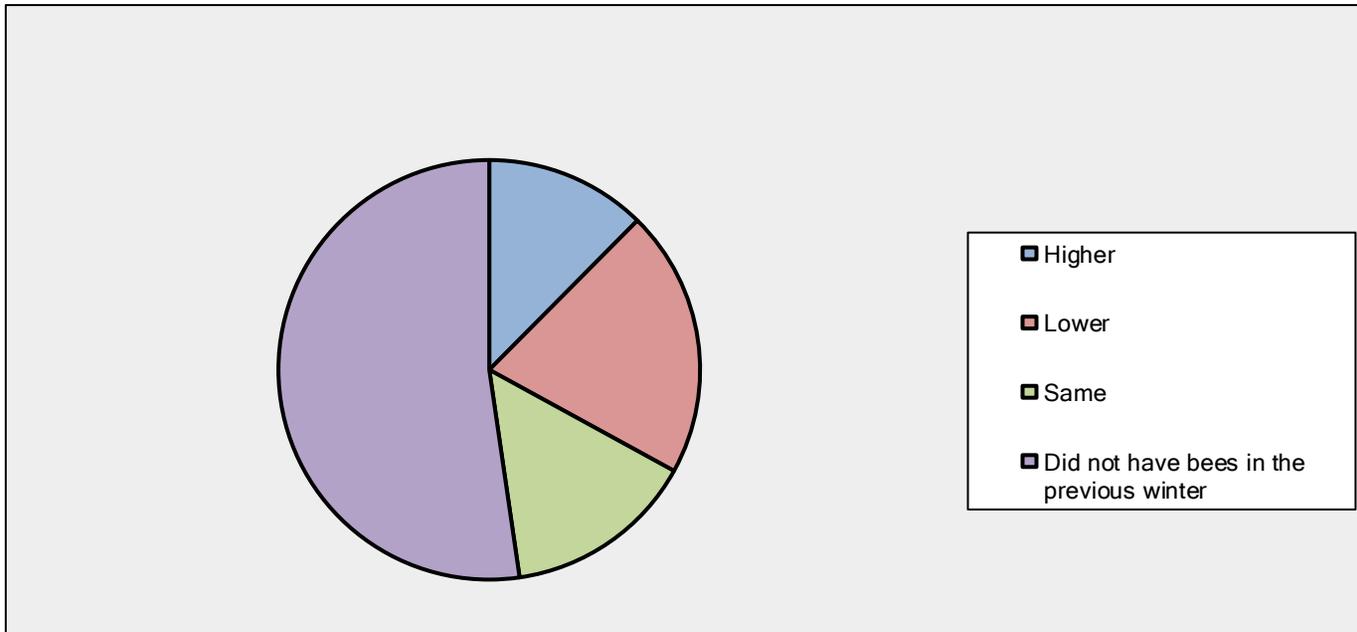


How many colonies did you overwinter and of those how many died?



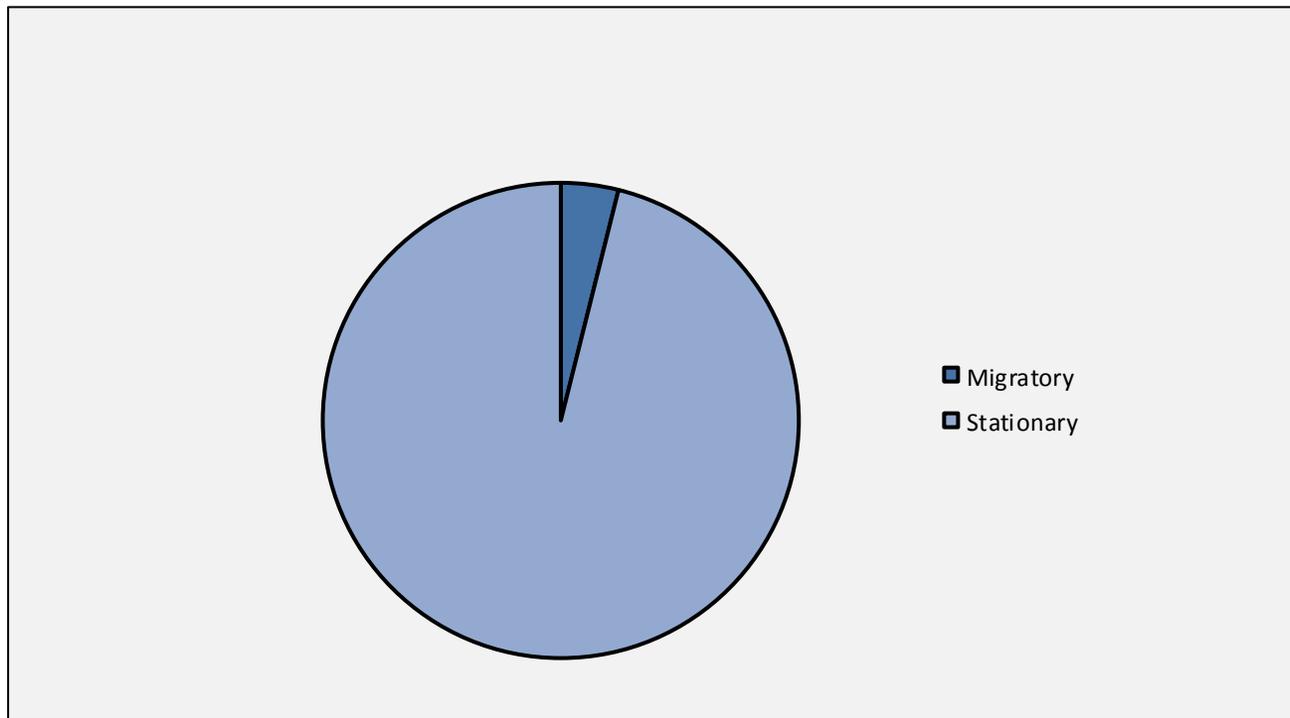
Questions	Response Average	Response Total
How many colonies were in your beeyard(s) going into winter?	5.94	1,817
How many colonies died during the winter?	2.13	651

Were your 2013/2014 winter losses, higher, lower, or the same as the previous winter?



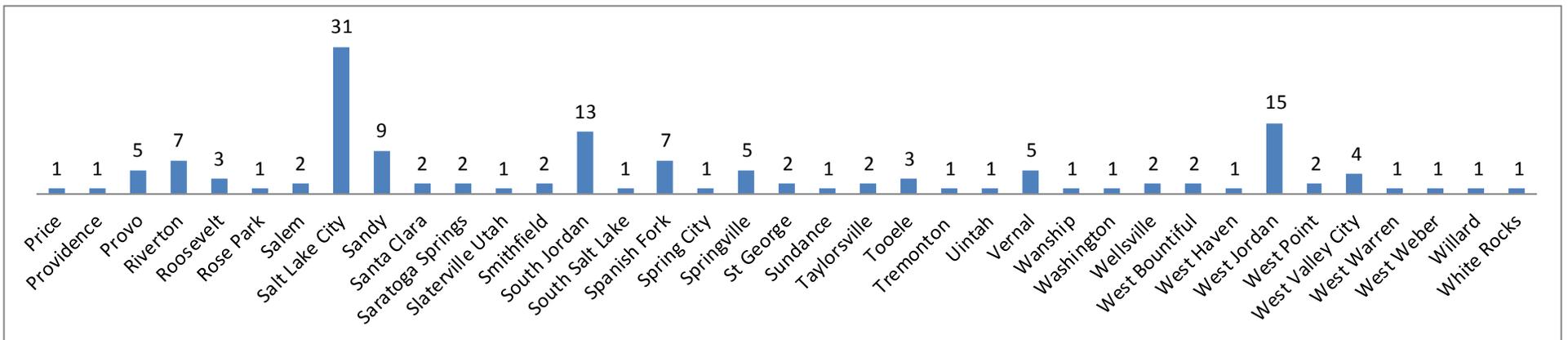
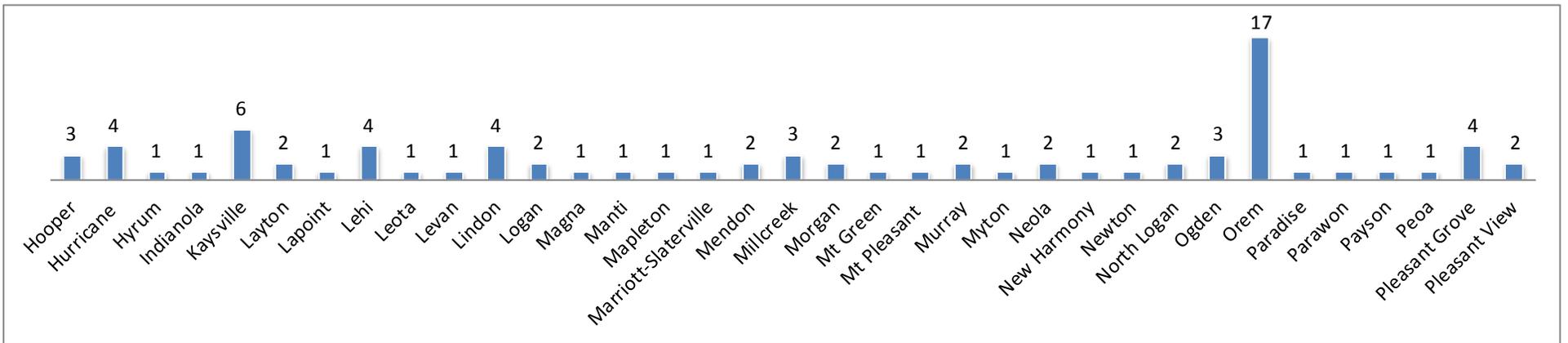
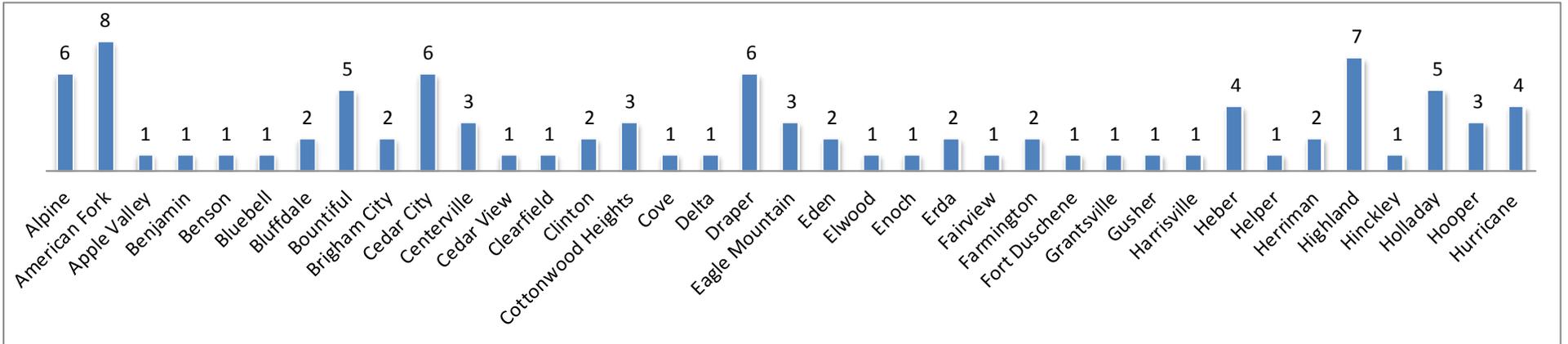
Answer Options	Response %	Response Count
Higher	12.4%	38
Lower	20.6%	63
Same	14.7%	45
Did not have bees in the previous winter	52.3%	160

Are you hives migratory (transported for pollination events) or stationary?

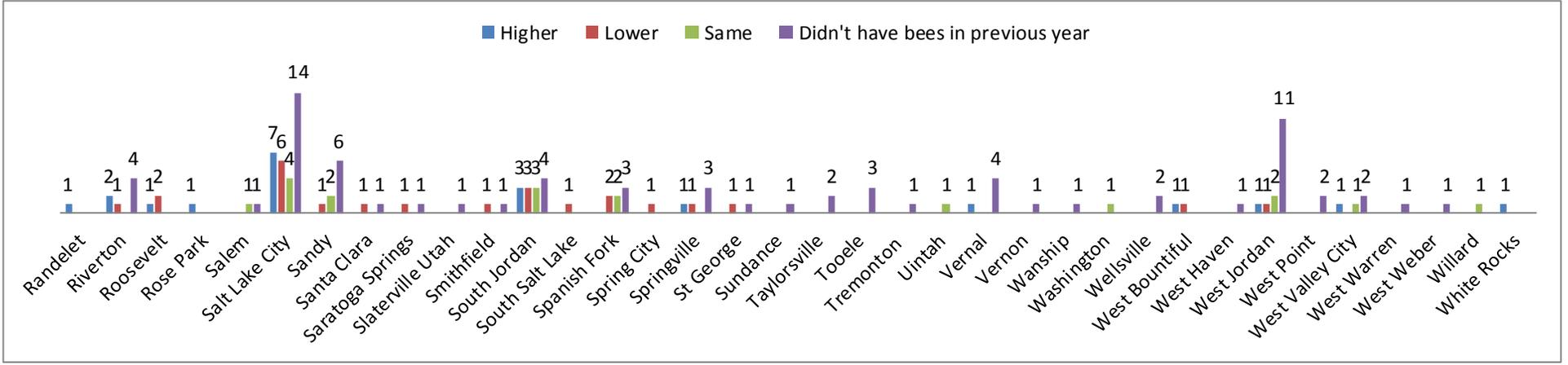
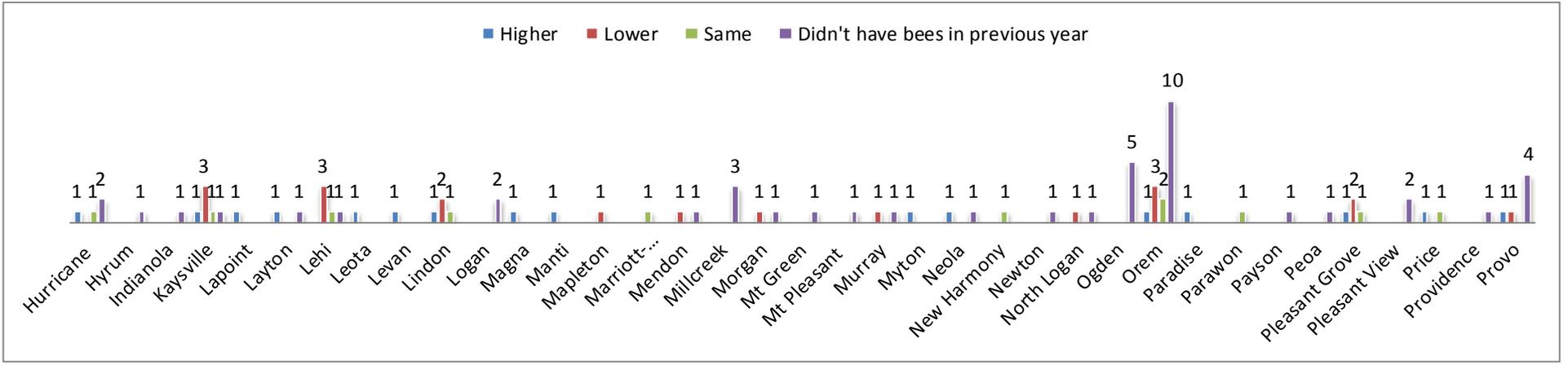
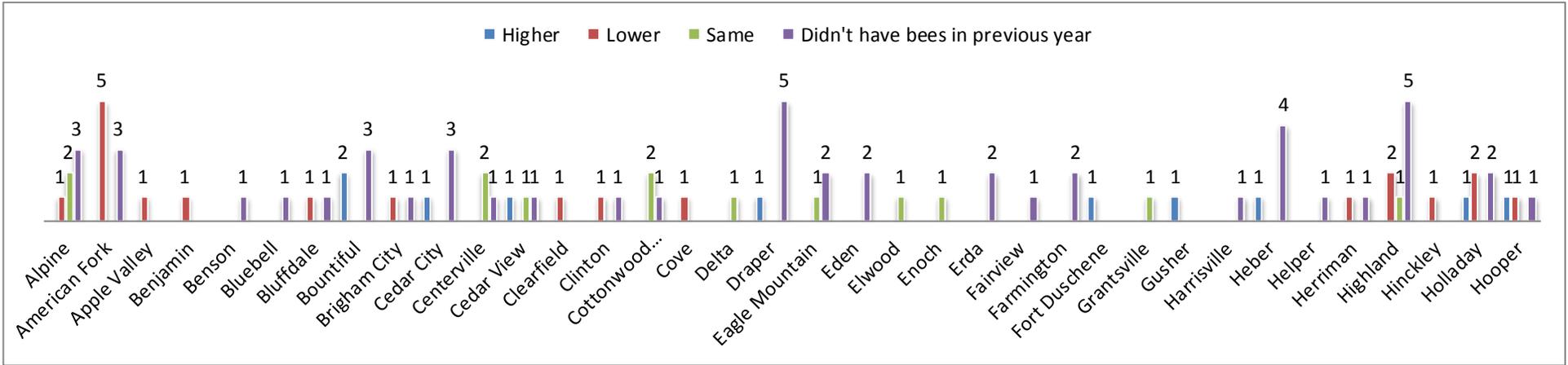


Answer Options	Response %	Response Count
Migratory	3.9%	12
Stationary	96.1%	293

Responses by City



Overwintering by City





Utah Department of Agriculture and Food 2014

For more information about honeybees and beekeeping visit:

<http://ag.utah.gov/plants-pests/beekeeping.html>