



Apiary *program*

Overwintering Survey
2014/2015

The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF) has conducted its second survey for overwintering losses of honey bee colonies. The survey was open to any beekeeper in the State of Utah between March and May of 2015; data was collected for the 2014/2015 winter. **The results of this survey are not scientific.** UDAF would like to thank many participants that took the time to complete this survey.

Methodology

The survey was open from the beginning of March to the first of May in 2015. The questionnaire was created on SurveyMonkey.com and invitations to participate were sent to all registered beekeepers that provided email contact information to UDAF. Six questions were asked in this survey:

- 1) **City(ies) where beeyard(s) are located?**
- 2) **How many colonies (excluding nucs and splits) were in your beeyard(s) going into the 2014/2015 winter?**
- 3) **How many colonies (excluding nucs and splits) died during the 2014/2015 winter?**
- 4) **Were your 2014/2015 winter losses higher, lower or the same as the previous winter?**
- 5) **Are your hives migratory (transported for pollination events) or stationary?**
- 6) **How many total gallons or pounds did your hives produce during the season (excluding nucs and splits)?**

Results

A total of 404 beekeepers responded to the survey. Beekeepers in the state had an average of 3.1 colonies going into the 2014/2015 winter; they lost an average of 1.4 during this period (see page 3). A plurality of beekeepers that had bees for more than one year, reported that these losses were higher than in the previous winter (28%). Approximately 17% of respondents claimed that their losses were

lower than the previous winter. Nearly 15% of beekeepers surveyed that their losses were the same as the previous winter. 40% of beekeepers said that they did not have bees in the previous winter (see page 4). The vast majority of participants were stationary beekeepers (97%) (see page 5).

The cities with the top number of responses were Salt Lake City (39), Sandy (14) and West Valley City (14). Cities where beekeepers reported the best honey production included Newton, West Mountain and Marriot-Slaterville; beekeepers in these cities averaged over 50 lbs per hive (see page 8). Utah beekeepers reported an average of 86 pounds of honey production, with a mean of 26 lbs per hive. Beekeepers in Taylorsville and Bountiful stated the best overwintering success. Overwintering losses in Saratoga Springs, Lehi and Spanish Fork were reported to be high (see Figure 1) .

Discussion

The results of the survey suggest that Utah beekeepers had less overwintering success in the 2014/2015 winter when compared to the previous season. The average yield of 26 lbs per hive reported is well below the national commercial average of 57 lbs per hive (NASS 2013).

Figure 1: Best and Worst Overwintering by City

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

Best

Taylorsville

6 respondents
66% lower losses

Bountiful

5 respondents
40% lower losses
40% higher losses
20% same losses

Worst

Saratoga Springs

5 respondents
100% higher losses

Lehi

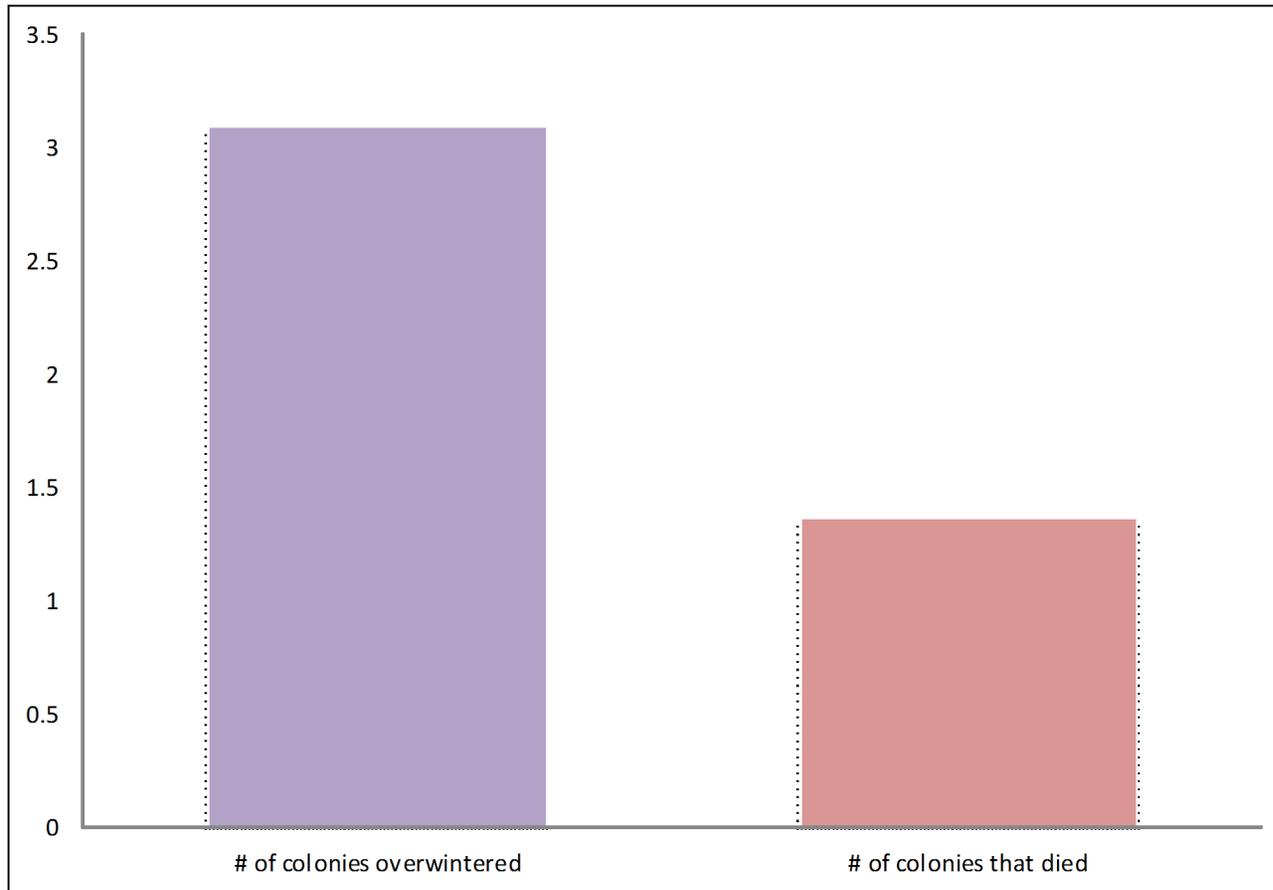
8 respondents
87% higher losses
13% lower losses

Spanish Fork

6 respondents
84% higher losses
16% same losses

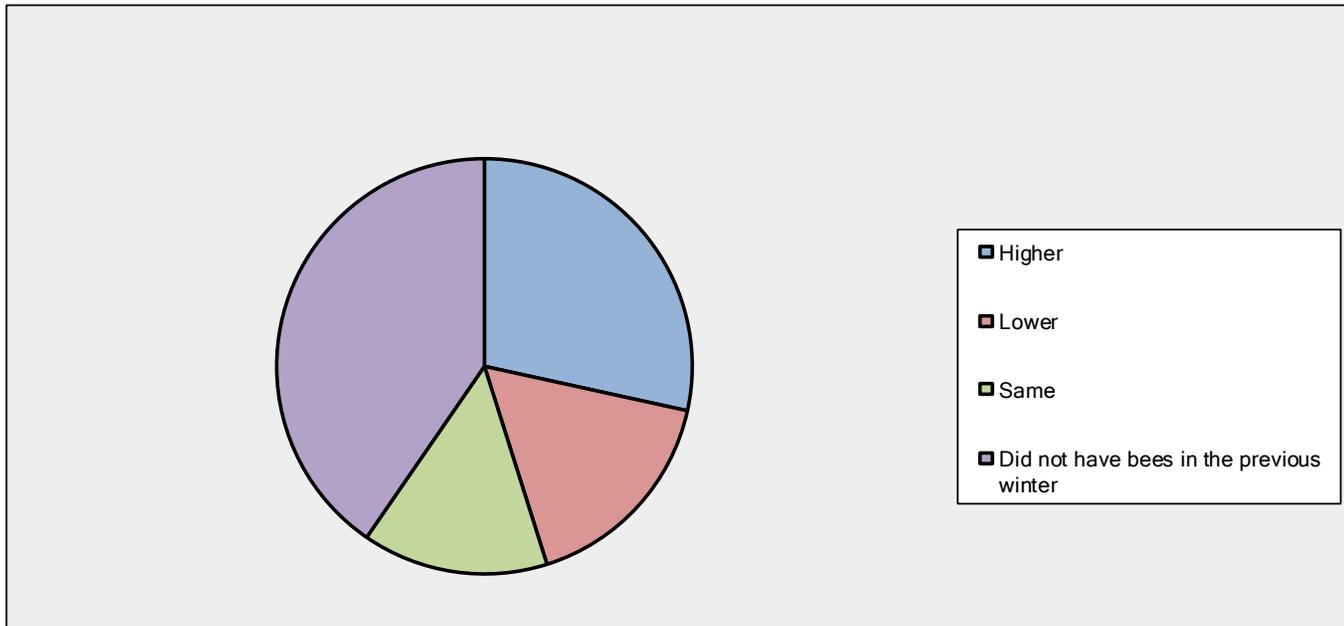


How many colonies did you overwinter and of those how many died?



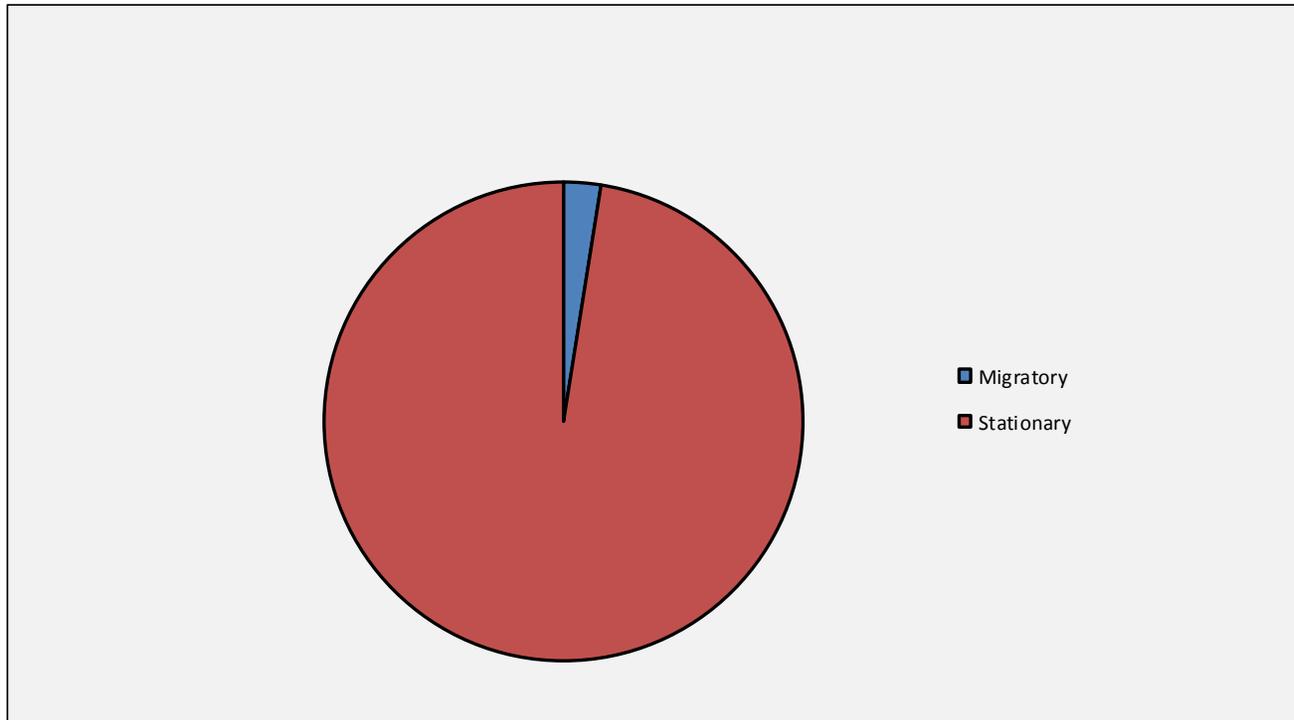
| Questions | Response Average | Total Colonies Reported |
|--|------------------|-------------------------|
| How many colonies were in your beeyard(s) going into winter? | 3.1 | 1,245 |
| How many colonies died during the winter? | 1.4 | 545 |

Were your 2014/2015 winter losses, higher, lower, or the same as the previous winter?



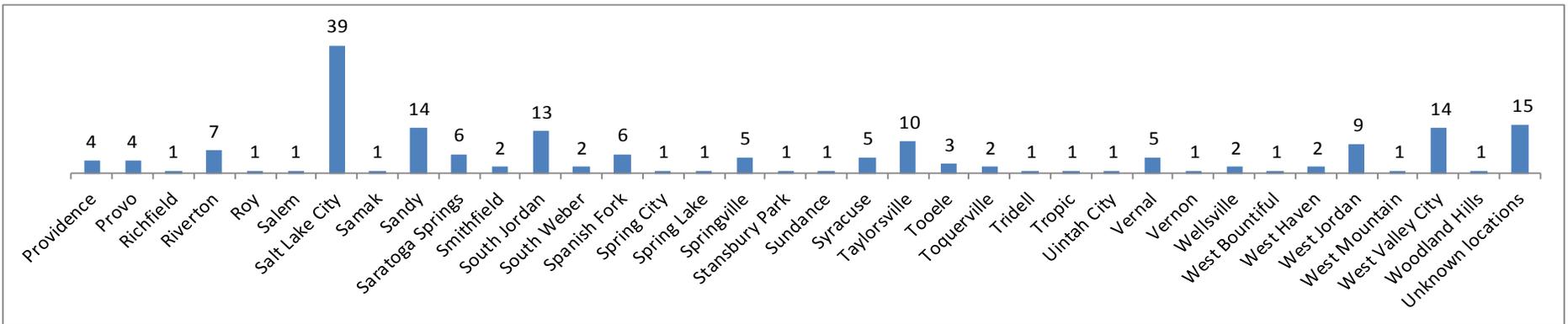
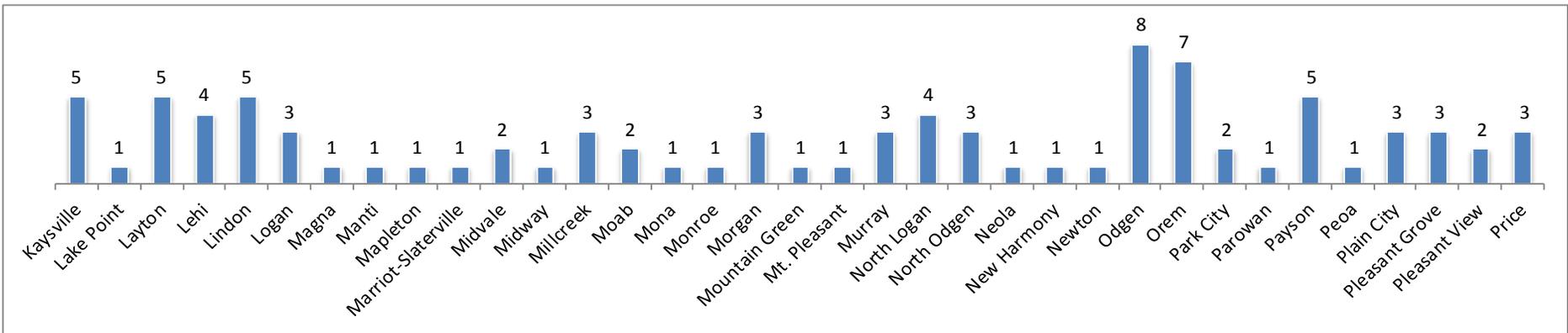
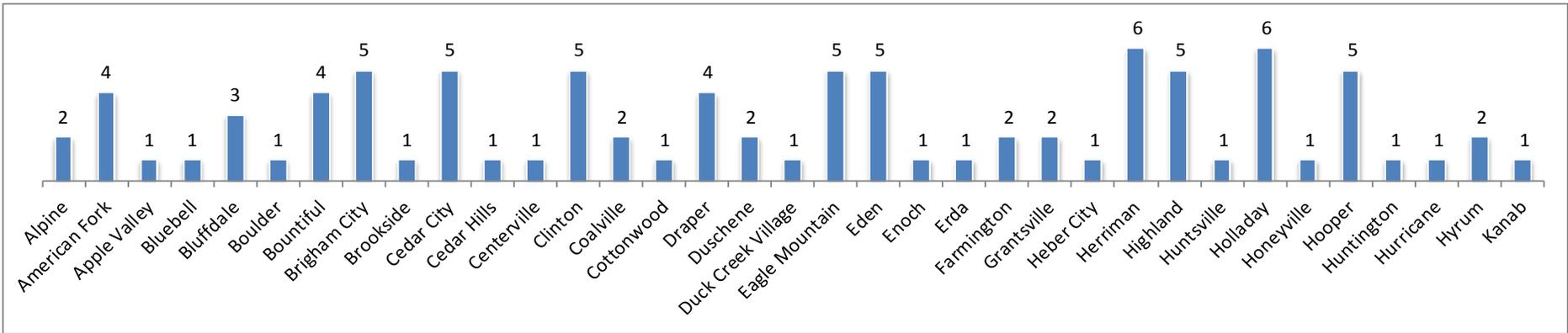
| Answer Options | Response % | Response Count |
|--|------------|----------------|
| Higher | 28% | 114 |
| Lower | 17% | 67 |
| Same | 15% | 58 |
| Did not have bees in the previous winter | 40% | 162 |

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

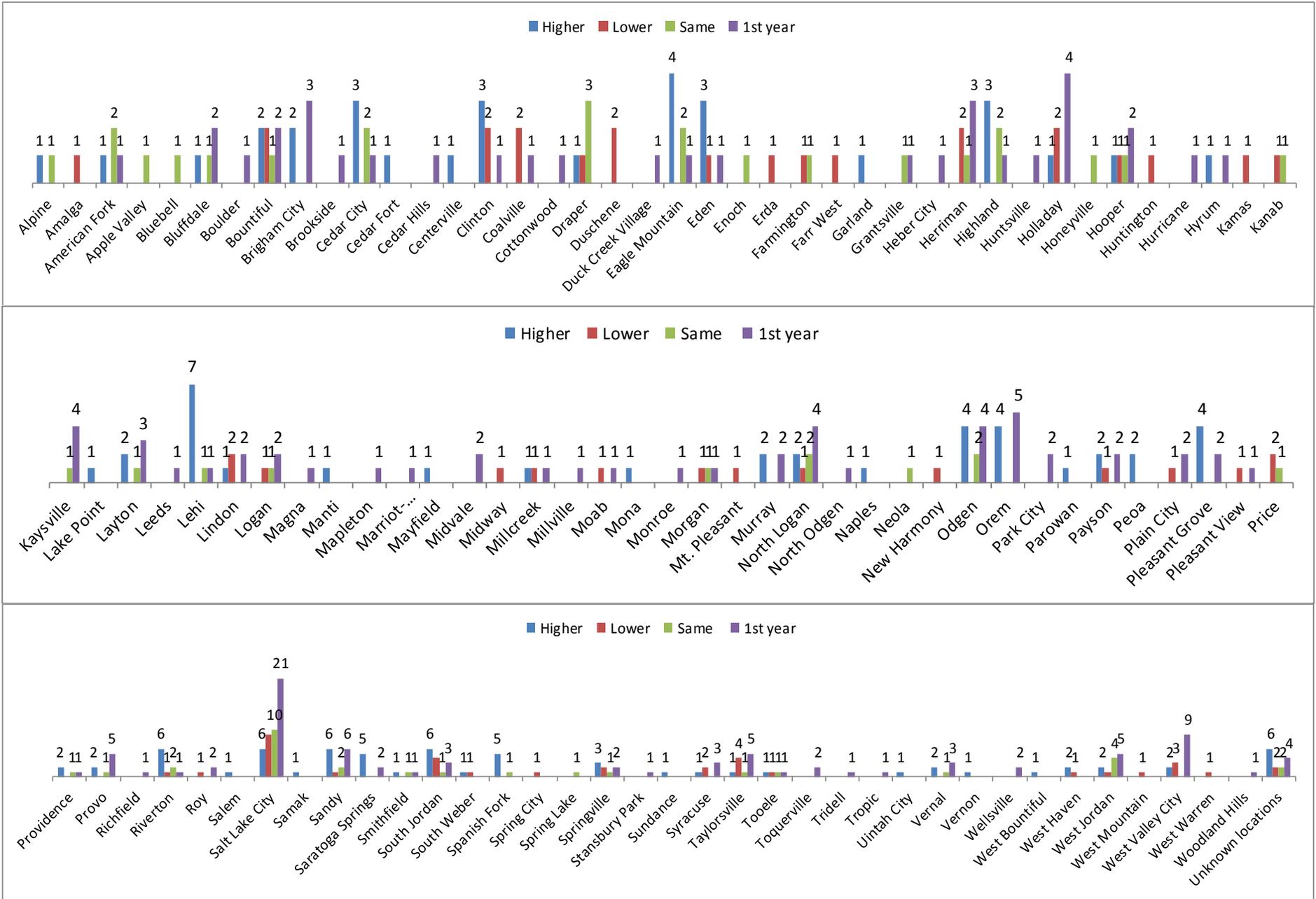


| Answer Options | Response % | Response Count |
|----------------|------------|----------------|
| Migratory | 3% | 10 |
| Stationary | 97% | 388 |

Responses by City



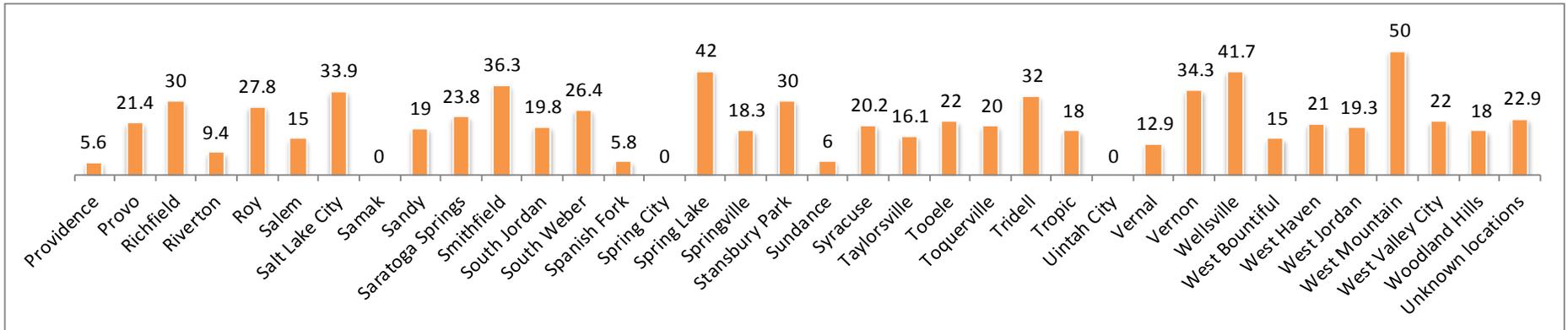
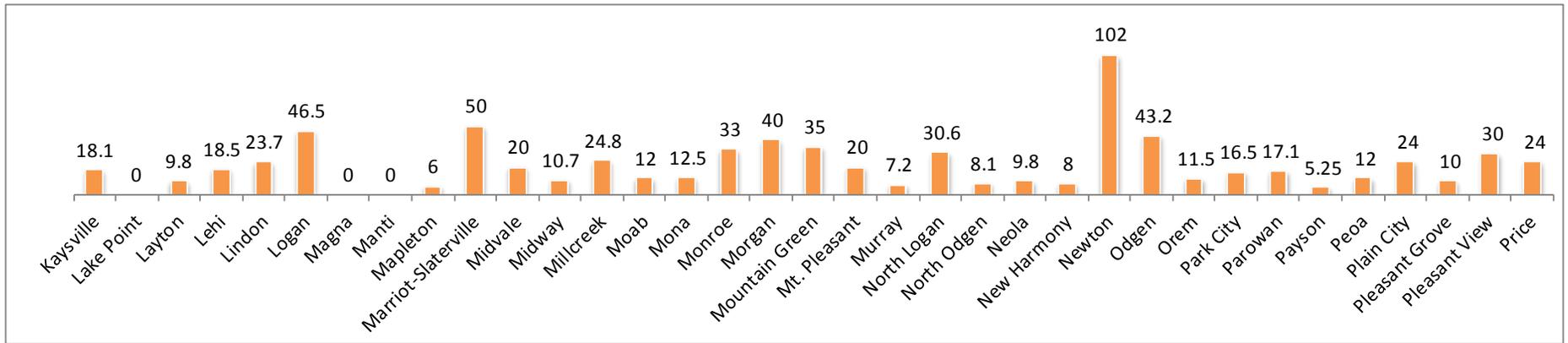
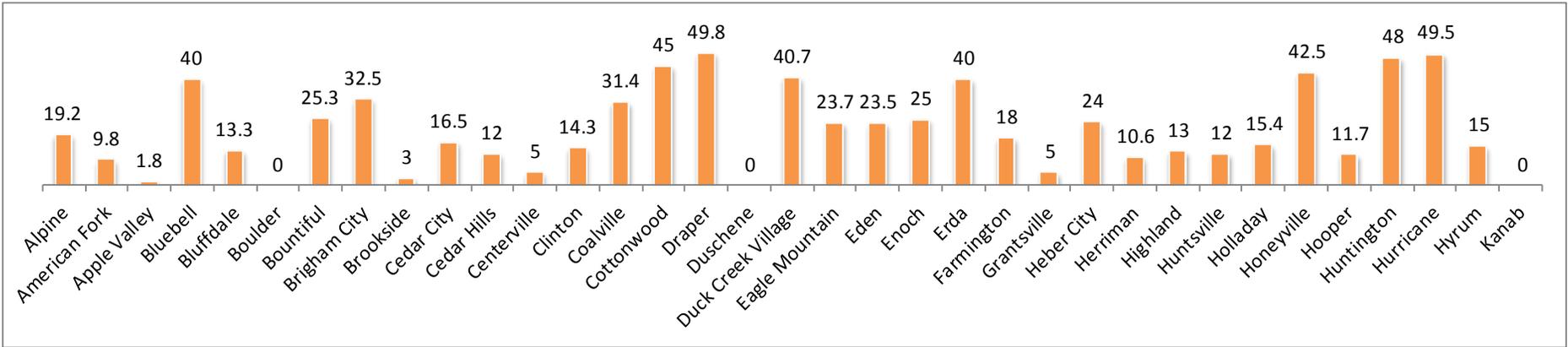
Overwintering by City



Reported Honey Production

| | |
|---------------|--|
| 31,961 | Total pounds |
| 370 | Number of beekeepers |
| 1,245 | Number of colonies |
| 86 | Average pounds per respondent |
| 26 | Average hive production |

Average Honey Production by City (lbs)





Utah Department of Agriculture and Food 2015

For more information about honeybees and beekeeping visit:

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

Citation: National Agricultural Statistics Service. "Number of Colonies, Yield, Production, Stocks, Price, and Value – States and United States 2013" United States Department of Agriculture. Published 20 March, 2015.