



Animal &  
Plant Health  
Agency

Animal and Plant Health Agency  
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Our Ref: ATIC1529

[REDACTED]  
{By Email}

05 December 2018

Dear [REDACTED]

## PROVISION OF REQUESTED INFORMATION

Thank you for your request for information on bee colonies which we received on 14 November 2018. Your request has been handled under the Environmental Regulation Information 2004(EIR).

The information you requested and our response is detailed below:

'- I'd like to get a sense of how the number of UK colonies has changed over the last 120 years. So perhaps the number in 1900, in 1925, 1950, 1975, 2000, 2018.

- I'm also interested to know how many beekeepers we've had during this timeframe, for those same dates.'

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. APHA only holds records for Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales).

BeeBase, in its current form, where beekeepers could register online, was launched in April 2006 hence some of the data in the earlier years or prior to this, is either not held in the requested form or is very immature. Scottish beekeepers have only been able to register since June 2010.

Where data is recorded as '0' we assume this to mean 'data is available and recorded as a zero value'. However, given the historic nature of some of the data provided and changes to county boundaries over time, caution should be taken to the accuracy of these figures as it is more likely that '0' values (or erratic values) recorded in the earlier years (especially 2006-2008) are actually a reflection of the lack of accurate data being available, rather than a true zero value.

Information for Northern Ireland should be requested from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/>

The Animal and Plant Health Agency is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs working to safeguard animal and plant health for the benefit of people, the environment and the economy.

However please see the attached published link that will provide some information on bees for this period <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/downloadDocument.cfm?id=378>

The information in the table at Appendix 1 was taken from BeeBase which is the APHA National Bee Unit website. It is designed for bee keepers and supports Defra, Welsh Government and Scotland's Bee Health Programmes and the Healthy Bees Plan, which set out to protect and sustain our valuable national bee stocks.

When referencing 'colony numbers', we are specifically referring to 'registered' honey bee colonies.

When referencing 'beekeeper numbers', we are specifically referring to 'registered' honey beekeepers.

BeeBase is a voluntary registration system, the data is only representative of those bee keepers and colonies registered and the information is dependent upon beekeepers updating their records.

The annualised figure may not necessarily be at the same time point each year. For 2018, the report was run in October 2018.

Please see Appendix 1 for the information taken from BeeBase.

Information disclosed in response to this EIR request is releasable to the public. In keeping with the spirit and effect of the EIR and the government's Transparency Agenda, this letter and the information disclosed to you may be placed on GOV.UK, together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context. No information identifying you will be placed on the GOV.UK website.

I attach an Annex which explains the copyright that applies to the information being released to you and contact details should you be unhappy with the service you have received.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact the Access to Information Team at the email address below or postal address at the top of this letter.

Yours sincerely

**ACCESS TO INFORMATION TEAM**

Email: [enquiries@apha.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@apha.gov.uk)

## Annex

### Copyright

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### Complaints

If you are unhappy with the result of your request for information you may request an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this letter.

If you wish to request an internal review, please contact: The Access to Information Team at [enquiries@apha.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@apha.gsi.gov.uk) or at the postal address at the top of this letter, who will arrange for an internal review of your case.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Please note that generally the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted APHA's own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF