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**NTDTV Special Coverage**

# Virus Suspected in Colony Collapse Disorder Phenomenon

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The role that honeybees play in pollinating plants is crucial to agriculture everywhere.

Plants remain stationary, so it has been up to the honeybees to visit hundreds of species of fruits, vegetables, flowers and nuts to do aerial pollination.

But there is great concern these days in Israel, the U.S., Europe and elsewhere over a phenomenon called Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), also known as Honeybee Depopulation Syndrome (HBDS).

Bees are leaving their hives without ever returning.

In the U.S.A. alone the number of bee colonies has declined by around 60% since 2006.

[Yuoval Lin, Bee Keeper]:  
"Two years ago following rumors that came from the U.S. we started to see in Israel the same phenomena going on in the U.S. – You would arrive at the bees' hive and find that the bees had abandoned it and now it's empty."

Ilan Sela is a Professor Of Molecular Biology & Virology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and is on the agricultural faculty.

A beekeeping friend of Professor Sela told him about a problem he was having with bees from his hives dying without any apparent reason.

[Ilan Sela, Professor of Molecular Biology & Virology]:  
"About 10 years ago a sudden death of bees in Israel had been noted and we've isolated a new virus from the dead bees, and identified it as an Israeli Acute Paralysis Viruses, IAPV for short. We have investigated cases of bee death much before we knew anything about CCD. It was kind of accidentally that we come across a new virus that later on turns out to probably be a major player in the CCD phenomenon."

Professor Sela was later able to silence the new virus and found that silencing the virus did indeed improve the hives. Then a laboratory in the U.S. made a statistical correlation.

[Ilan Sela, Professor of Molecular Biology & Virology]:  
"At about this time, an American group mostly in Pennsylvania US FDA in Maryland and in a laboratory in New York found a statistical correlation of 96.6% between Israeli Acute Paralysis Viruses and Colony Collapse Disorder-effected hives."

Starting next year, one remedy will be to supply the hives with sugar water.

This will help save the bees that play a fundamental role of supplying mankind with food.

Lee Rom, NTD, Israel

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