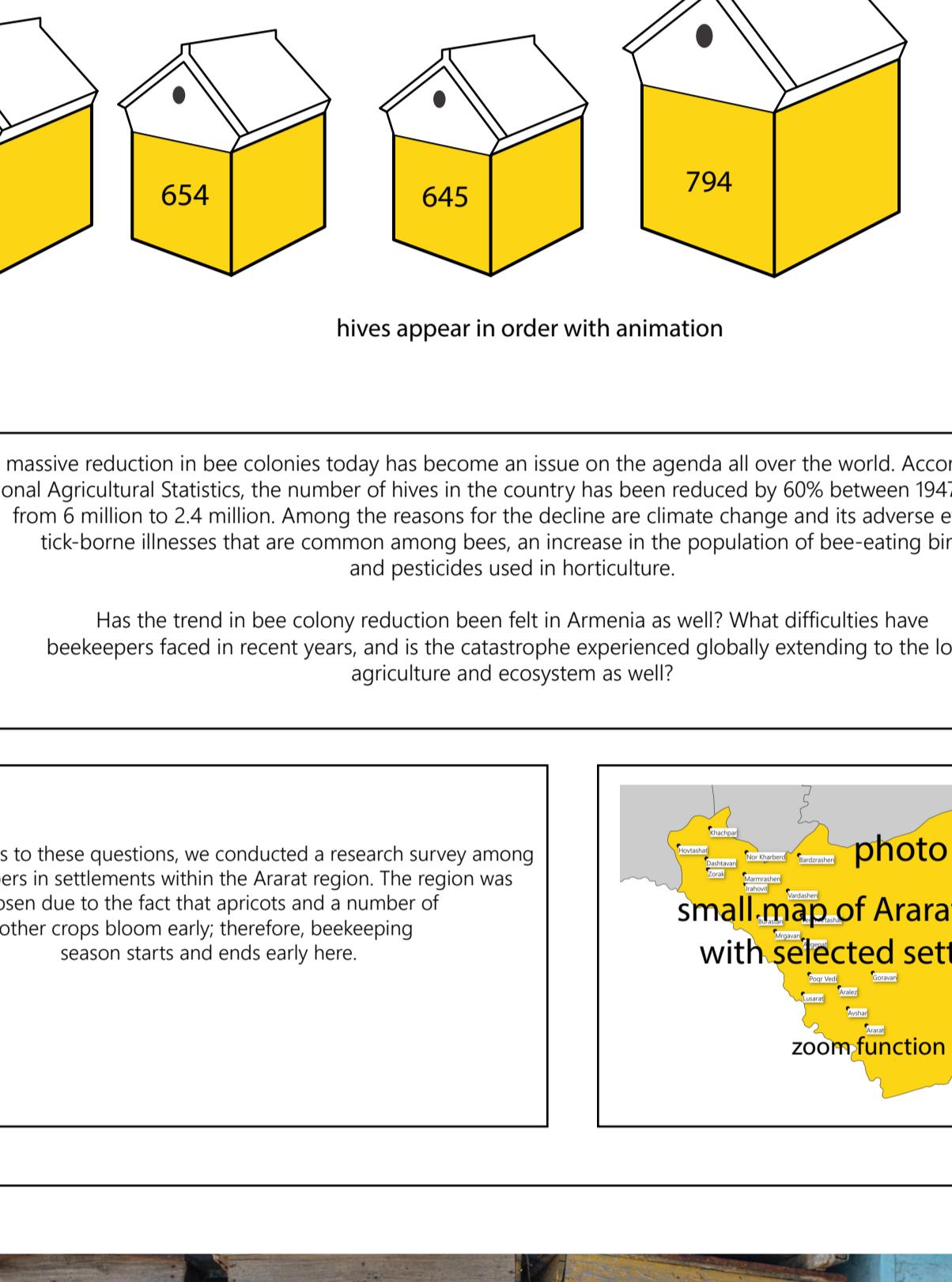


In our search for "pure honey" and a healthy lifestyle, we cannot even imagine the environmental challenges and diseases facing the little insects making that honey.

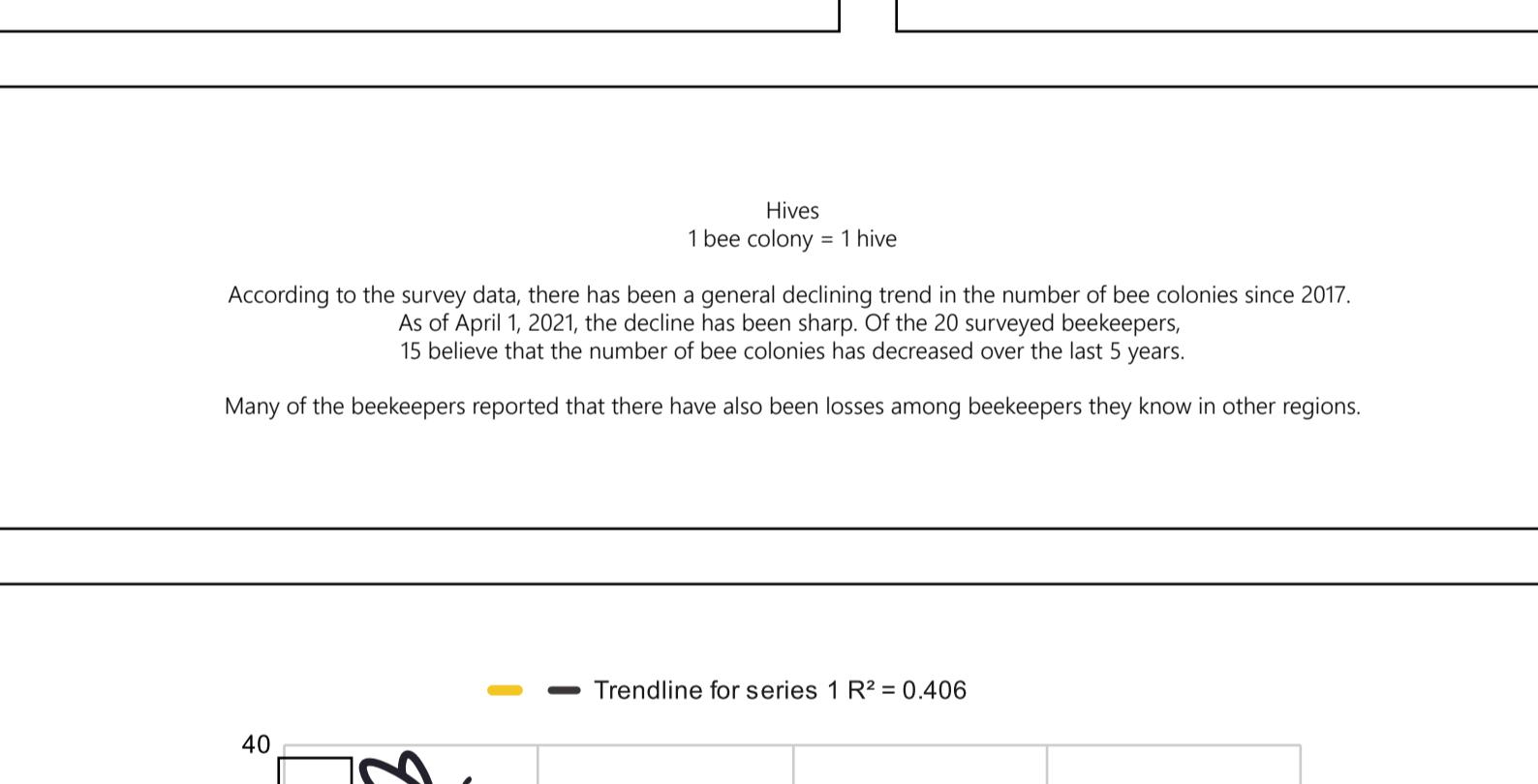
Bees and honey are at risk



Aralez village

As the main pollinator for a number of agricultural crops, bees increase the yield and fertilization of fruit trees, herbs, and vegetables, which is a vital necessity for humans and for the stability of the animal world food chain.

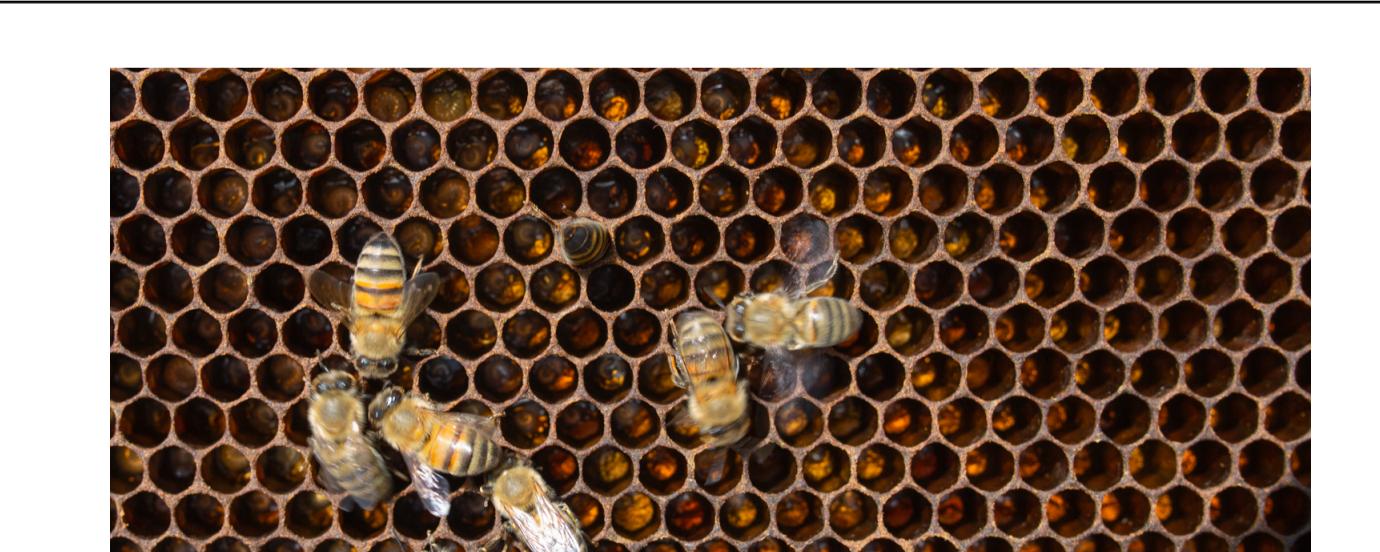
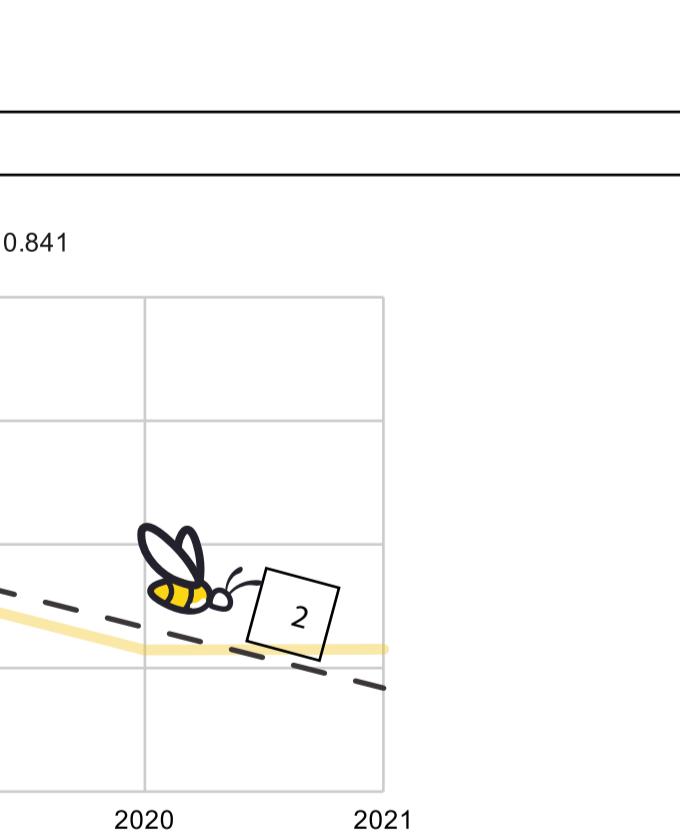
Twenty beekeepers in the Ararat region lost a total of 300 hives in the spring of 2021.



The massive reduction in bee colonies today has become an issue on the agenda all over the world. According to US National Agricultural Statistics, the number of hives in the country has been reduced by 60% between 1947 and 2008, from 6 million to 2.4 million. Among the reasons for the decline are climate change and its adverse effects, tick-borne illnesses that are common among bees, an increase in the population of bee-eating birds, and pesticides used in horticulture.

Has the trend in bee colony reduction been felt in Armenia as well? What difficulties have beekeepers faced in recent years, and is the catastrophe experienced globally extending to the local agriculture and ecosystem as well?

To get answers to these questions, we conducted a research survey among 20 beekeepers in settlements within the Ararat region. The region was chosen due to the fact that apricots and a number of other crops bloom early; therefore, beekeeping season starts and ends early here.



Zorak village

Demographics

We conducted the survey among 20 beekeepers in settlements in the Ararat region. The settlements were selected using GIS, a geographic information system application, which randomly selected 20 out of 95 settlements. Individual beekeepers in the chosen settlements participated in the survey.

As a principle, those who were first to respond were selected.

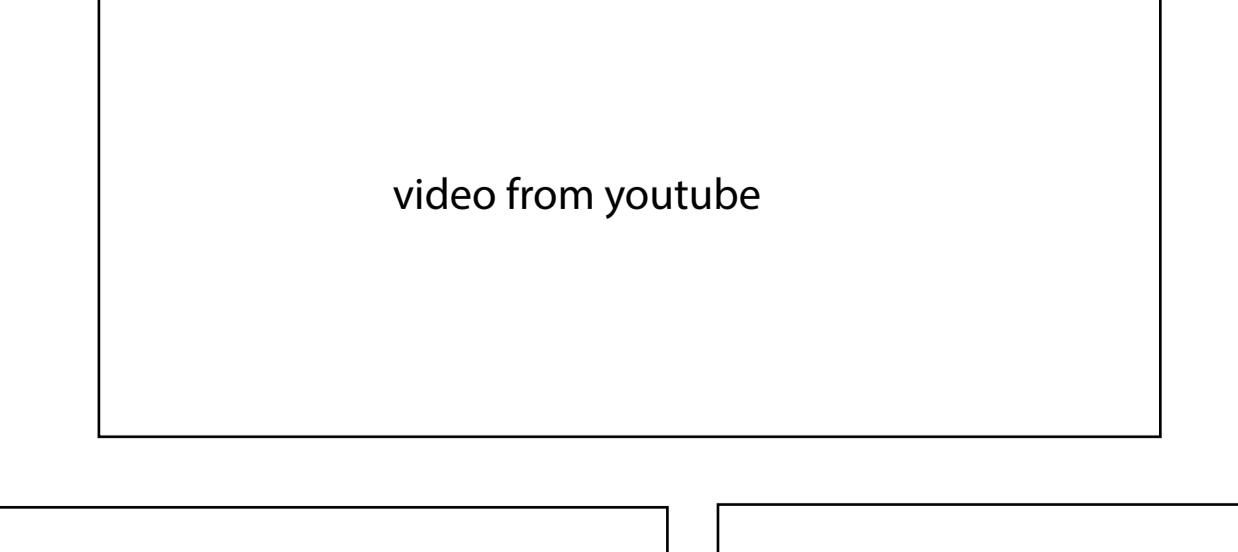
Most beekeepers are elderly, and beekeeping is typically work that is passed down in the family. Half of the 20 beekeepers surveyed have been engaged in this work for over 20 years.

Among the randomly selected respondents were one woman beekeeper and one national minority representative from the Assyrian community.



According to the survey data, there has been a general declining trend in the number of bee colonies since 2017. As of April 1, 2021, the decline has been sharp. Of the 20 surveyed beekeepers, 15 believe that the number of bee colonies has decreased over the last 5 years.

Many of the beekeepers reported that there have also been losses among beekeepers they know in other regions.



sliding 1x

The graphic shows the average number of bee colonies for all 20 beekeepers over the last 5 years.

Data provided by the Ararat regional administration corroborates the decline in bee colonies.

The year 2018 stands out in particular, as 1,200 more registered bee colonies were lost as compared to the year before. The declining trend was also found in later years but was not as sharp, if we look at the data per region, more than 2,200 bee colonies were lost in Ararat city, where beekeeping is most active and flourishing. In the area around Masis, around 150 hives were lost, whereas in the region around Artashat the number of bee colonies increased by around 300.

Ararat city

Masis

Artashat

Ararat region

Armenia

Armenia