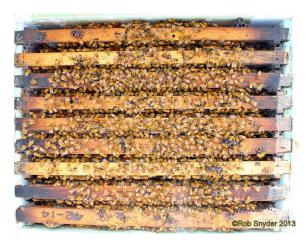# Estimating Frames of Bees (FOB)

This is the first colony-grading measurement that should be taken. After initially gently smoking the colony, (let's assume it is two deeps), hinge the top box up, and gauge 1) how many **full frames of bees** are in the bottom box from the appearance of the top-bars and 2) how many full frames of bees are in the top box from the appearance of the bottom-bars. Do this for every box. You may adjust their FOB estimate as you work the colony.

Look to see how completely the bees are covering the frames from end to end, how far down the bees go, and how crowded the bees look. You need to count **how many frames are filled with bees**, and then subtract the frame portion with no bees.

← On this photo of a 9-frames bee box, wee see about 7 totally covered in bees and the outer 2 partially covered. In this case each of the outer 2 frames is counted as a half. We'd estimate this box has 8 frames of bees.

By only looking at the top of the frames, you cannot tell if the bees go all the way to the bottom of the frames and you may overestimate the frames of bees. Tipping up the box to view the **underside** shows you if the frames are really full with bees or if the bees don't go all the way to the bottom of the frames. Counting both the top and bottom of frames gives a much better estimate of the actual frames of bees.

The left image (a.) has about 5.5 frames of bees and the right image (b.) has approximately 1.5 frames of bees. So we would average both to say the box counts 3.5 frames of bees.

a

b

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