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## Bees 'killed by mobile phone signals'

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An unusually high number of honey bee deaths in Britain this year may be caused by radiation from mobile phone signals, say experts.

British beekeepers have called for further research following the release of a German study showing that radiation can interfere with bees' navigation systems.

In some cases, 70 per cent of bees exposed to radiation failed to find their way back to the hive after searching for pollen and nectar, according to the research by Landau University.

The researchers placed cordless-phone docking units, which emit electromagnetic radiation, into bee hives.

Bee experts are struggling to determine the cause of colony collapse disorder (CCD), a mystery condition in which bees suddenly abandon their hives and disappear to die.

In America, 24 states are affected and losses of 50 to 90 per cent of colonies have been recorded. CCD recently spread to Poland, Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal and last week some keepers in Britain reported losses exceeding the 10 per cent of colonies that usually die during winter.

John Chapple, one of London's foremost beekeepers, said 30 of his 40 hives were empty and that other hives around London had lost up to 75 per cent of their bees.

If CCD does take hold in Britain it could have far-reaching implications for farming, as bees pollinate millions of hectares of fruit trees and crops.

The pollination is worth £200 million to Britain's farmers each year. The total contribution by bees to the economy is worth up to £1 billion.

Brian Dennis, of the Bee Improvement and Bee Breeding Association, said: "There is so much being said about CCD in America and [radiation] hasn't been mentioned.

"Until someone does a large study, it is hard to be sure."