

SBA Technical Data Sheet No. 21 - HIVE WEIGHING to Check the Amount of Stores

Beginners are often advised to “heft” their hives to check how much food is onboard. However, hefting needs some experience. until you get a handle on hefting, it is not difficult to weigh hives. This document shows how weighing can be carried out pretty accurately using a luggage scale and a piece of wire or screwed rod

First make a hive weighing wire (from a piece of 3mm fence wire or M5 screwed rod (Toolstation about £3)) about a metre long- bend a 5cm section at one end to catch under the side of the floor. If using screwed rod add a 18mm x 18mm angle brace (Toolstation £1 per 10 - drill holes out to 6mm) at the other end, held in place with two M5 nuts for attachment to the luggage scale.



Using a luggage scales, weigh each side and add the two figures together to obtain the total hive weight (this procedure works if the fulcrum pivot is at either extreme edge as shown – it would not work if the hive was pivoting in-board of the edges on e.g. a central brick support- you would then need an engineer possessing a tape measure & a knowledge of the mechanics.

The aim is that a full-size colony should have 18kg of food on board as it enters winter at the beginning of October.

Feed strong syrup 1kg sugar to 550ml water – a smidgeon of thymol may be added to prevent sugar moulds forming if the bees are tardy in taking it down. (make up a stock solution of 50g thymol crystals to 250ml of surgical spirit and add 0.5 ml of this stock solution per litre of syrup feed)

A reasonable weight for a single broodbox wood Smith or National would be 28 to 30 kg. with floor and roof. 24 would be a bit light.

If the colony is on double broodboxes, on 8 + 8 frames 30 to 33 kg. 25kg would be a bit light. Polyhives could be a bit lighter due to the reduced weight of the equipment (approx. 4 or 5 kg less)