

10th Caribbean Beekeeping Congress. – Antigua and Barbuda Country Paper.

Mr. B. Georges

President Beekeepers Association

History of Beekeeping in Antigua and Barbuda

1945

Informal Beekeeping started:

- * People harvested honey from bees in the trees.
- * Agriculture officially recognized bees as pollinators.

1982

Meals from Millions/ Freedom from Hunger Foundation

- * Offered first beekeeping programme in Antigua

- Providing: technical and financial assistance to the few beekeepers on island.

*Mr. Hank Theones facilitated beekeepers training process and demonstrated the removal of hives from houses and trees.

- He also demonstrated the Kenya Top Bar Hive (insert photo).

- * In his second year he taught the group how to rear queens and build the longstroth hive (insert photo).

Because the group was experiencing issues because of the type of wood originally used to build the Kenya top bar hive.

Mr. M. Schwartz replaced Mr. Theones and continued to train Antiguan beekeepers.

1984

Ms. Ruth Spencer attended a beekeeping workshop and training course at the Agriculture Technical Institute University in Ohio Wooster.

1985

Mr. Eustace Samuel the beekeeper with the most hives was also sent for training.

By this time beekeeping began to gain traction and a number of persons were exposed to technical training.

Barbuda

1987

The beekeeping project began in Barbuda, it was always speculated that there were no bees in Barbuda. After visiting Barbuda to ascertain whether they had food for bees to forage and to meet with council members. More than twelve hives were taken to Barbuda and more than a dozen beekeepers were trained.

It is clear our history has established that beekeeping has strong viability in Antigua and Barbuda
Beekeepers (1985)

Denfield Morris, Dennis Horsford, Dalmar and Elain Edwards, Kenny Pascall, Vincent Derrick, Vincent Benjamin, Patrick Lay, Elrick Paige, Abudu Jaima, Evan Creque, St. Claire Allen, Bernard Nichols, George Dyer, Eustace Samuel, Darnel Edwards, Walton Warner, Mrs. Lynn Foster, Patrick Samuel, Dr. Radcliffe Robins, Patrick Colbourne, Wilfred George, Neil Barnes.

N.B Lynn Foster, Bernard Nichols and Eustace Samuel continue are still practicing beekeepers.

Demographic profile of sector

1. Type of bees.

European
Italian
Bumble Bees

2. Number of colonies.

There are an estimated 460-480 managed colonies through beekeepers co-op members. Another estimated 150 hives are managed by non-members.

3. Number of beekeeper by sex/age.

Beekeepers Cross Section		Age					
		15-25	25-35	35-45	45-55	55-65	65-above
Sex	Female	0	2	3	2	1	2
	Male	3	4	11	3	1	4

4. Production Levels of various hive.

The Longstroth Hive which is used in Antigua and Barbuda under drought conditions, typically yields 60-70lbs (5.5-4 gal) per year. Under normal conditions local hives typically yield 100-120lbs (10-11 gal). Yield quantities are standard through out the state

5. Value-added hive-products – Lip balms, soaps, candles, wines and batik production are the main products derived from hives.

Value Chain Mapping

Honey Value Chain



Imports

Bee supplies and equipment purchased from Kelley Beekeeping Co., Kentucky, USA

CMC sells: bottles, covers and seals.



Private agencies:
ABDB-financing facility

Individual beekeepers manage hives



Public Authorities:
Dept. of Agric, Customs, Min. of Trade

Extraction of honey from combs may be done with the Cooperative's extractor or with personal extractor. The honey is sieved and bottled. This can be done at the cooperative or individual home

Exports- indirect to visitors and residents living overseas
Sales to: Supermarkets
Hotels, Restaurants,
Food Industry, private customers
Imports (other honey)



Service providers:
IICA, CROSQ, ABBS,
Analytical Services
Laboratory

Support Institutions

Successes and Challenges to Development

Successes to Development

1. There have been multiple opportunities for training and development, both online and hands on; increasing the abilities of local beekeepers exponentially.
2. Potential geographical indicator status for Barbuda logwood honey.
3. Renewed interest in beekeeping because of COVID-19 and its push for the development of local sources of food products. Whether it has been to increase honey production or the use of bees for pollination by local farms COVID-19 has brought traction to beekeeping in Antigua and Barbuda.
4. Partnership and Alliances and NGOs – The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Caribbean Agriculture Research Development Institute (CARDI) and Gilberts Agricultural and Rural Development Center GARDC), as well fellow farming associations have made critical linkages improving quality and value of products.
5. Stake holders group Ministry of Agriculture – the beekeepers association is now recognized as a farming group within Antigua and Barbuda.

Challenges to Development

1. Uncontrolled Clearing of Lands - diminishing foraging capacity.
2. No reserved/ designated area beekeeping.
3. Lack of legislation – unfortunately, there are not mandates governing the destruction or handling of hives.
4. Honey Hunting – Destruction of feral colonies by persons after honey. Destroying hives that normally provide genetic material in times of pest and disease.
5. Lack interest in becoming members of the beekeepers cooperative. This prevents training opportunities from reaching those in need.
6. Climate Change- The effect of hurricanes and other natural disaster. The prolonge drought which usually occurs in Antigua and Barbuda.

Future Projects

- Increasing Value added products – skin care (lotions, waxes, hair dresses etc...)
- Queen Rearing for Antigua and Barbuda- courtesy Global Environmental Fund.
- Increasing women in beekeeping – courtesy Australian High Commission (60 women should be trained through out the twin island state)
- Entrepreneurship strengthening of Beekeepers SME's – FAO and IICA (30 new beekeepers will be trained about the business of bees).