Issue 17 · November 2025

BUY LOCAL HONEY

European Beekeeping Association

NO BEES LIFE

EBA MAGAZINE

30 COUNTRIES

FROM WHICH EBA HAS MEMBERS

(56 beekeeping organizations)

In order of confirmation of the Statute of EBA

418.849 beekeepers

Serbia
Slovenia
North Macedonia
Bulgaria
Greece
Romania
Malta
Germany
Hungary
Ukraine
Montenegro
Lithuania
Bosnia and Hercegovina
Sweden
Croatia
Czech Republic
Poland
United Kingdom
Netherlands
Italy
Ireland
Belgium
Cyprus
Türkiye
Switzerland
Prishtina
Portugal
Spain
Slovakia
Austria
Albania

GENERAL SPONSOR

OF THE
EUROPEAN BEEKEEPING ASSOCIATION

SAVA
INSURANCE
GROUP

AMONG GOOD PEOPLE

SAVA
ZAVAROVALNA
SKUPINA

V DRUŽBI DOBRIH LJUDI

SILVER SPONSOR

OF THE
EUROPEAN BEEKEEPING ASSOCIATION

SILVER SPONSOR

OF THE
EUROPEAN BEEKEEPING ASSOCIATION

BRONZE SPONSOR

OF THE
EUROPEAN BEEKEEPING ASSOCIATION

BUY LOCAL HONEY!

One of the main goals of the European Beekeeping Association is to raise consumer awareness of the importance of buying local honey, which for all Europeans means buying European honey. To this end, the EBA has created a special "logo" with which we want to encourage consumers to buy local honey.

We ask that this logo be widely used by both beekeeping organizations and beekeepers. Wide use is essential so that we can warn all European honey buyers about this as soon as possible! The text on the logo has been translated into all EBA member languages.

In accordance with the 2025 program, the EBA is preparing a number of promotional advertisements on the topic of let's buy local honey, and a short video advertisement is also being prepared, which will also be available in all EBA member languages.

Why buy local honey?

By choosing European honey, you help beekeepers to maintain the interest in beekeeping and thus contribute to the survival of bees. Wild pollinators have been decimated by intensive agriculture, and the honey bee can survive for as long as beekeepers have a symbolic interest in raising bees. Without beekeepers there are no bees. Without beekeepers they would disappear in less than two years due to unmanaged bee parasites.

Europeans know that European beekeepers respect the rules of traditional production, take care of bees, and deliver safe honey of the highest quality to consumers.

European regulations ensure high hygienic standards of honey production. European bees are not treated with antibiotics and other agents banned in Europe, so the possibility of honey contamination is excluded.

European honey contains antioxidants, minerals and probiotic bacteria that are more adapted to our body than expected.

The territory of geographical Europe produces honey of incomparably better quality and aroma than imported honeys, due to its clean nature and waters.

By choosing European honey, you improve the quality of all domestic agricultural products that require pollination, because pollination cannot be imported like honey.

By choosing European honey, you help preserve nature and European biodiversity, because bees, in addition to cultivated bees, also pollinate

a huge number of wild plants that are a crucial part of the food chain in nature.

By choosing European honey, you support the cultural heritage and centuries-old culinary experiences that contribute to our health and connect us to nature. It has been proven that adding honey to culinary dishes contributes to a better absorption of nutrients from those dishes in our body.

By choosing European honey, you reduce the environmental pollution associated with long-distance transport, as well as the use of energy sources in the honey adulteration process. In contrast, beekeeping improves the environment and uses and relies only on local natural resources.

By choosing European honey, you support local beekeepers, reduce inflation and the outflow of capital from Europe.

By choosing European honey, you are eating real bee honey. The European Commission has announced that almost 50% of imported honey is fake. You have the greatest guarantee of quality when you purchase honey directly from beekeepers in your area, and if you purchase it in a store, pay attention to the country of origin, because the safest honey is from the territory of geographical Europe. Most counterfeits contain sugar syrups with additives. Such adulterated ("fake") honey had mostly no contact with bees and only serves to deceive consumers and profit counterfeiters."

Counterfeit honey can contain even sodium hydroxide (caustic soda), artificial enzymes (which are also added to the so-called vegan "honey", which does not actually exist, because there is no honey without bees), artificial flavors, artificial colors and low-grade sugars, which are added during counterfeiting and can present risks for human health. In such fake honey, there is not even the slightest biological value that bee honey provides to the human body.

Authentic bee products are increasingly successfully used in apitherapy (a branch of complementary medicine based on science and rich tradition).

Boštjan Noč
President of the European Beekeeping Association

BADGES FOR ALL BEEKEEPERS TO BE PROMOTERS OF THE BUY LOCAL HONEY PROJECT

BUY LOCAL HONEY

European Beekeeping Association eba

KUPUJMO LOKALNI MED

European Beekeeping Association eba

The all-European EBA campaign - BUY LOCAL HONEY is starting, which will be presented to the public shortly.

Because we want all beekeepers to be promoters of the BUY LOCAL HONEY project, we have made badges. The 2cm x 2 cm badge is currently in Slovenian and English (inscription). If EBA members are interested in making it in other languages (minimum order 50 pieces), we will make them in other languages as well.

The badge will be available at the Beekeeping Association Slovenia secretariat : ines.zunic@czs.si at a price of 5 euros per piece.


COMPRA
MIELE
LOCALE
European
Beekeeping
Association


VEGYÉL
HELYI
MÉZET
European
Beekeeping
Association


ΑΓΟΡΑΣΕ
ΤΟΠΙΚΟ
ΜΕΛΙ
European
Beekeeping
Association


ACHÈTE
DU MIEL
LOCAL
European
Beekeeping
Association

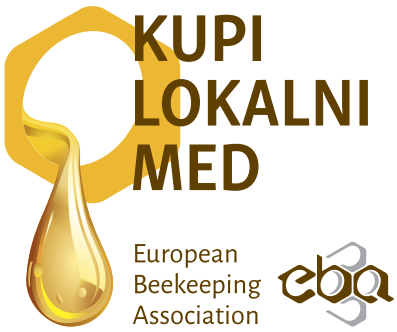

KAUF
REGIONALEN
HONIG
European
Beekeeping
Association


KAUF
OAN HONIG
VO DO
European
Beekeeping
Association


KUPUJTE
LOKÁLNÍ
MED
European
Beekeeping
Association


ΑΓΟΡΆΣΤΕ
ΤΟΠΙΚΌ
ΜΈΛΙ
European
Beekeeping
Association

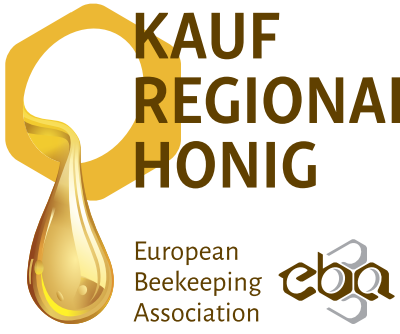

KUPUJTE
LOKALNI
MED
European
Beekeeping
Association


KUPI
LOKALNI
MED
European
Beekeeping
Association


КУПУЈМО
ЛОКАЛНИ
МЕД
European
Beekeeping
Association


КУПЕТЕ
МЕСТЕН
МЕД
European
Beekeeping
Association


BLEJ
MJALTË
LOKAL
European
Beekeeping
Association


KAUF
REGIONALEN
HONIG
European
Beekeeping
Association


KOOP
LOKALE
HONING
European
Beekeeping
Association


YEREL
BAL AL
European
Beekeeping
Association


KAUFE
REGIONALEN
HONIG
European
Beekeeping
Association


KÖP
LOKAL
HONUNG
European
Beekeeping
Association


COMPRA
MIEL
LOCAL
European
Beekeeping
Association


КУПУЙ
МІСЦЕВИЙ
МЕД
European
Beekeeping
Association


KUPUJTE
LOKÁLNY
MED
European
Beekeeping
Association


CUMPĂRĂ
MIERE
LOCALĂ
European
Beekeeping
Association


COMPRA
MEL
LOCAL
European
Beekeeping
Association


KUP
LOKALNY
MIÓD
European
Beekeeping
Association


КУПИ
ЛОКАЛЕН
МЕД
European
Beekeeping
Association


KOOP
LOKALE
HONING
European
Beekeeping
Association


KUPI
LOKALNI
MED
European
Beekeeping
Association


CEANNAIGH
MIL
ÁITIÚIL
European
Beekeeping
Association


PIRKITE
VIETINĮ
MEDŲ
European
Beekeeping
Association


IXTRI
GĦASEL
LOKALI
European
Beekeeping
Association

EBA EXECUTIVE BOARD ENDORSES LETTER TO EU INSTITUTIONS ON THE BEEKEEPING ENVELOPE

The Executive Board of the European Beekeeping Association (EBA) has approved and endorsed a letter addressed to the European Commission, the European Parliament, and the AGRI Committee, expressing strong opposition to the potential abolition of the special beekeeping envelope within the new Common Agricultural Policy for 2028–2034.

In the letter, EBA highlights the crucial importance of maintaining dedicated support for the beekeeping sector, stressing that without beekeepers there are no bees, and without bees there is no pollination or food security. The Association calls on EU institutions to preserve and strengthen the beekeeping envelope and to increase funding for the protection of bees and beekeeping across Europe.

The letter approved by the EBA Executive Board can be found below:

Dear EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Mr Christophe Hansen,

Dear President of the European Parliament, Ms Roberta Metsola,

Dear Chair of the Agri Committee, Ms Veronika VRECIONOVÁ,

Dear EU Members of Parliament,

Subject: European Beekeeping Association strongly against the abolition of the beekeeping envelope

According to our information, it is being considered that, within the framework of the new CAP for the new programming period, the special beekeeping envelope will be abolished and the funds will be merged with other funds for agriculture.

The European Beekeeping Association, which includes 419,000 beekeepers from 30 countries, is asking you to maintain the special beekeeping envelope also in the new programming period of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy 2028-2034.

Without bees, there is no pollination, and unfortunately, without beekeepers, there will be no bees. Every third spoonful of food depends on bee pollination, which cannot be imported.

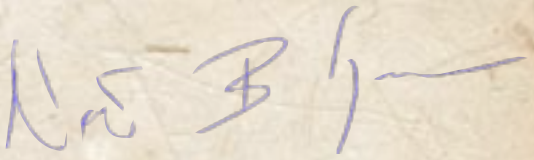
The beekeeping sector is in an extremely difficult situation, as according to the EU Commission, almost half of the honey is counterfeit. Unfortunately, there is no solution in sight and beekeeping across Europe is threatened with collapse. Due to the huge unfair competition represented by counterfeit honey, beekeepers are already abandoning beekeeping and will do so even more in the future, as they will simply be forced to do so due to economic unsustainability.

Thinking about abolishing the special beekeeping envelope in these difficult times is unacceptable for beekeepers, moreover, we European beekeepers expect the beekeeping envelope to be preserved and that the funds for the preservation of bees and beekeeping to increase. We also expect dedicated funds from environmental funds as compensation for the pollinating service of bees. Support must be urgently strengthened, primarily through the immediate removal of counterfeit honey from the market.

Dear authorities in this field, we believe in you, and above all we believe that you are aware that without bees there is no food and without beekeepers there are no bees! Without bees there is no biodiversity, no green and blooming Europe ... ultimately there are no people.

Thank you in advance for your support of our proposal and we look forward to our cooperation in the future.

President of the European Beekeeping Association
Boštjan Noč



BEES LIFE

EBA WILL GIVE THE EU COMMISSIONER REAL HONEY FROM 30 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

Official Announcement from the Executive Board of the European Beekeeping Association

EBA has decided to give the EU Commissioner real honey from 30 European countries — because, unfortunately, half of the honey that consumers in Europe buy is fake!

Today, the Executive Board of the European Beekeeping Association(EBA) held a meeting.

A key decision is the launch of the EBA promotional campaign via Facebook and Instagram. EBA will regularly prepare posts on different topics twice a week.

EBA has also decided to give European Commissioner Hansen real European honey (from all 30 EBA member states) in December.

With this gesture, EBA wants to remind him that he is very lucky to receive real honey, while, unfortunately, half of Europeans buy fakes.

Therefore, EBA expects the Commissioner to support the EBA proposal for Europe to create a single European promotional campaign – "**EUROPE BUYS LOCAL, EUROPEAN!**"

Currently, the biggest guarantee for the European consumer is to buy honey – which is real honey; to buy local honey from a local beekeeper!

Each members EBA is requested to send one jar of honey (900 g) to the following address: **MEP Peter Agius, European Parliament, ASP Building, Office 07F136, Rue Wiertz 60, 1047 Bruxelles, Belgium**.

To ensure timely coordination and preparation of the collective presentation, we kindly ask you to dispatch your honey sample **no later than 5 December 2025**. Please make sure to clearly label your package with your country name, association name and include a short note indicating that it is part of the **"EBA – Real European Honey for Commissioner Hansen" campaign**.

Boštjan Noč
President of the EBA

FROM JUNE 1st, 2026, CONSUMER DECEPTION WILL END!

On Octoner 17, 2025, on behalf of the Beekeeping Association Slovenia and the European Beekeeping Association – EBA, I attended an excellent international conference on the quality and safety of bee products in Kastav, Croatia. In my address, I once again highlighted the historic moment that will take place on June 1st. 2026. From that day on, honey will have to be labeled throughout Europe with a precise indication of the origin of the honey. So, the end of consumer deception with indications of honey from the EU and outside the EU. This was accepted by the EU at the initiative of the Beekeeping Association Slovenia which was implemented by the state of Slovenia with its supporters.

Congratulations to the organizers.

Boštjan Noč
President of the EBA

IMPORTANT EBA EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

At October 14, 2025. Executive Board meeting of the European Beekeeping Association (EBA), several important decisions were made regarding the Association's activities for the remainder of the year.

The EBA Executive Board discussed planning EBA's work until the end of 2025, including the launch of a new promotional campaign on social media, the organization of new webinars, and the summary of recent meetings with the AGRI Committee.

A special focus was placed on the new volunteer team within EBA, who will enthusiastically support the upcoming social media campaign. In addition to EBA Executive Board members, Mr.Žiga Jenko and Ms. Nika Pengal also attended the meeting. The Executive Board extends special thanks to dr. Urška Ratajc, Head of EBA Scientific Committees, for her contribution to today's meeting. The EBA Executive Board also reviewed EBA's recent international activities, including the meeting of the EBA President with the President of Apimondia, the acceptance of EBA as a member of the Apimondia Assembly, the re-election of Petar Kozmus as Vice-President of Apimondia, the constructive meeting with BeeLife, and participation in EU and non-EU roundtables.

Finally, the EBA Executive Board confirmed its decisive action towards the European Commissioner and discussed internal organizational matters, including coordination of ongoing projects, planning future activities, volunteer engagement, and ensuring smooth operation of the Association. This ensures that EBA continues to represent and work in the best interest of bees, beekeepers and consumers in Europe, effectively.

Boštjan Noč
President of the EBA

WORLD FOOD DAY

IT'S TIME TO REALIZE THAT REAL FOOD DOESN'T GROW ON STORE SHELVES!

On October 16th, we celebrate World Food Day. Food is a basic need for all people around the world, but unfortunately, more than a billion people are still hungry in the world. I believe that we all agree on one thing – every person on this planet deserves to have food every day. Too few of us realize that food doesn't grow on store shelves, but rather has to be produced by the hardworking hands of farmers. Too few of us realize that every third spoonful of food depends on bees and other pollinators, too few of us realize that REAL food is the foundation of human health.

Unfortunately, in recent years, a huge amount of counterfeit and low-quality food has appeared on the market, which is often even harmful to people's health. At the same time, this causes unfair competition to the entire agricultural sector. It is simply impossible to compete with the prices of real local food, produced in accordance with European standards.

Agriculture and beekeeping are the basis for a sustainable lifestyle. We all know that one of the key pollutants of our environment is transport. By buying local food, from local farmers and beekeepers, we will reduce long transport routes.

In Europe, it is essential to be aware that real food grows in local fields with the help of the hardworking hands of local farmers and beekeepers.

Even our grandmothers knew that the best is HOMEMADE, which today we also call LOCAL. Let HOMEMADE – LOCAL be on our tables as often as possible!

Boštjan Noč
President of the EBA

BEEKEEPERS WANT SUPPORT FOR BEEKEEPING FROM THE POPE

The candle is ready, we are waiting for Pope Leo XIV to announce when beekeepers from all over the world will be able to visit the Vatican!

Today we blessed a candle made of pure beeswax in Polzela. The blessing was performed by the Archbishop of Maribor, Metropolitan Msgr. Alojzij Cvikl. The beeswax candle was made together by beekeepers and citizens of Polzela, for which the Beekeepers' Association of Slovenia and the European Beekeeping Association would like to thank them. The candle will be stored and exhibited at the Beekeepers' Association of Slovenia until it is handed over to Pope Leo XIV.

The Beekeepers' Association of Slovenia and the European Beekeeping Association have long been striving for Pope Leo XIV to offer a mass for all beekeepers of the world in 2026. Through the Ambassador of Slovenia to the Vatican, Mr. Franc But, we have already established contacts with the Holy See, and we are also looking for other ways to agree on a date with the Holy See as soon as possible, so that we can immediately start organizing a visit to the Vatican from Slovenia, Europe and the world.

We want the "world" to also receive the Vatican's message about the importance of bees and bee products. We also want the world to realize that bees cannot survive today without the help of beekeepers!

The candle weighs 17kg and is 1m tall.

We also want Pope Leo XIV to warn the world about the necessity of preserving bees and beekeepers, because without bees and beekeepers there will be no pollination and thus no food, so there will be even more hunger, which is unacceptable in the modern world! We all know that bee products are what strengthen our health, so we want to remind the Pope, and through him the entire world, that unfortunately almost half of the honey on the market is fake and that only real honey, produced exclusively by bees, strengthens health!

Boštjan Noč
President of the EBA

LAMORIX®

Luxury anti-age cream with
bee venom and **Q10**

www.lamorix.com

BeeConn

beeconn.si

@beeconn.si

BeeConn is growing its global sales network

1:1 partner experience
Be part of a successful company
Premium beekeeping technologies

Are you ready?

Strip's d.o.o., Kandrše 7, 1252 Vače, Slovenia T: +386 3 56 70 770 I E: info@beeconn.net I W: www.beeconn.net

THE PROBLEM OF HONEY FRAUD IN THE EUROPEAN MARKET REMAINS UNSOLVED

Introduction

One of the biggest challenges facing Europe today is the continuous influx of cheap, adulterated, fake, and degraded honey imported from third countries. These products often enter without proper border controls, are “upgraded” to meet the minimum legal standards and then flood the European market as “authentic.” This causes consumer deception, unfair competition, profiteering, and severe market distortion.

Although this issue has been known for many years, and despite the existence of effective legal tools to confront it, the European Union has failed to implement the necessary measures. This article exposes the EU’s responsibility for maintaining the conditions that allow honey fraud to persist and expand.

1. How the Problem Began: The Free Entry of Fraudulent Honey into Europe

Europe already possesses strong legislation capable of stopping degraded honey at its borders. Regulation (EU) 2017/625 explicitly allows for the inspection of every single consign-

ment of honey entering the EU through Border Control Posts (BCPs).

These posts must be staffed with qualified personnel, appropriate scientific equipment, and access to official laboratories capable of providing timely and reliable analytical results (Article 64.3).

Given that honey is internationally recognized, alongside olive oil, milk, coffee, apple juice, orange juice, and saffron, as one of the seven most frequently adulterated food products, all honey consignments should be required to enter exclusively through designated BCPs.

Moreover, Article 47(1d) of the same Regulation empowers the European Commission to adopt implementing acts to strengthen official controls on products originating from third countries where widespread non-compliance is detected. This condition clearly applies to honey, as revealed by the EU Coordinated Action "From the Hives" (2023), which found that most consignments from China, India, Israel, the United Kingdom, Zambia, and other countries failed to meet EU quality standards.

However, despite this clear legal basis, the EU has not enforced these measures. The results of "From the Hives" (Table 1) show the alarming extent of non-compliant imports across member states.

This data make one fact undeniable: border control legislation exists but is not enforced. The problem does not lie in weak laws, but in the EU's unwillingness to apply them.

Table 1. Results from the EU Coordinated Action "From the Hives, March 2023, that indicates the importation of not comply honey in European countries.

Countries	Number of operators who imported at least one honey sample did not comply with the EU Honey Directive.	
Belgium	4/4	100%
Greece	3/3	100%
Ireland	1/1	100%
Netherlands	3/3	100%
Denmark	1/1	100%
Germany	14/16	88%
Spain	11/13	85%
Poland	11/18	61%
France	3/5	60%
Bulgaria	2/4	50%
Czeck Republic	1/2	50%
Lithuania	1/2	50%
Norway	1/2	50%
Switzerland	1/2	50%
Italy	2/7	29%

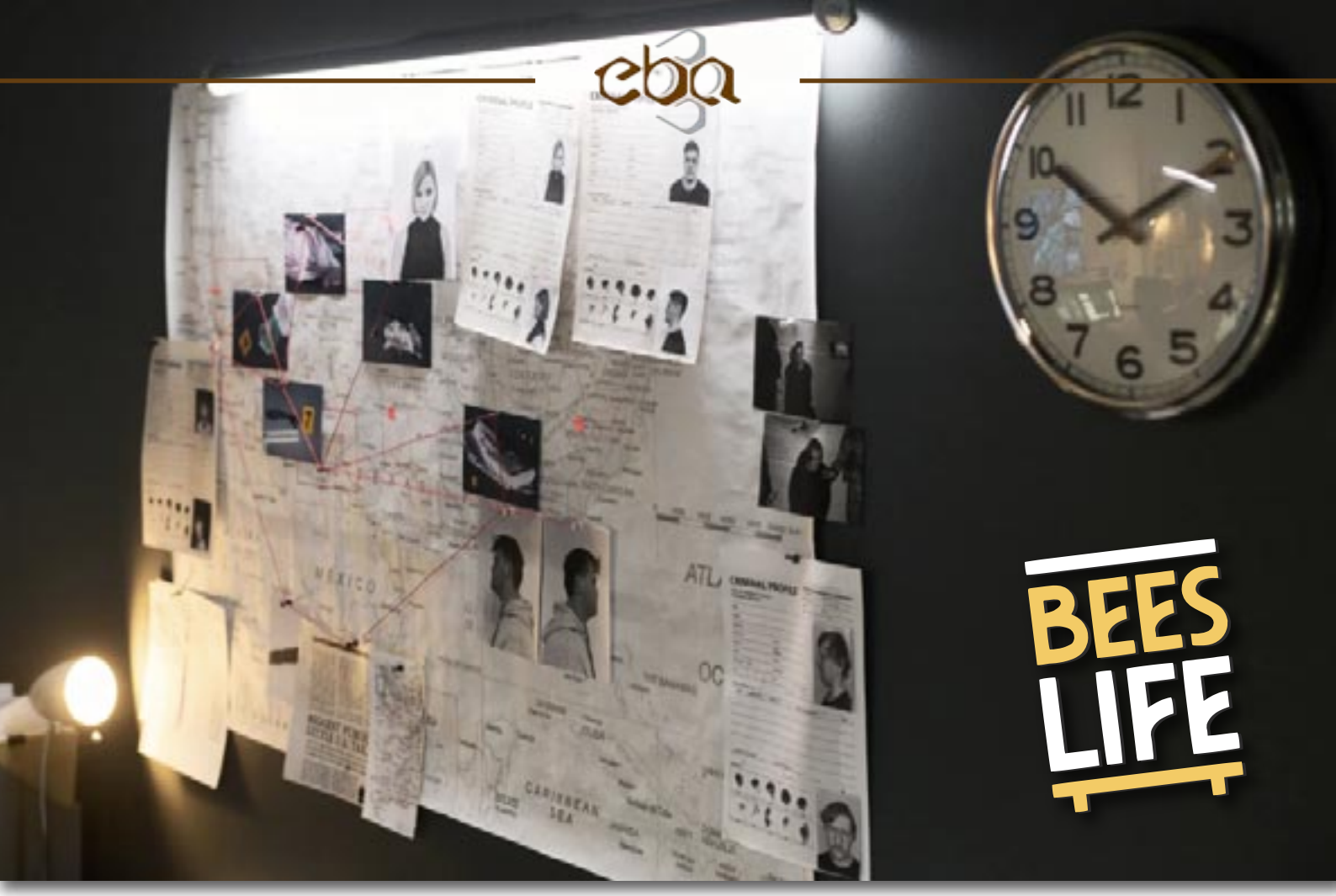
2. Ignored Safeguards: The Non-Application of Anti-Dumping Measures

Dumping occurs when a product is exported at a price lower than its normal value or production cost, distorting domestic markets. The EU already applies anti-dumping measures to more than 50 categories of Chinese products — including aluminum, bicycles, ceramics, glass, and steel — under Regulations (EU) 2016/1035, 2018/825, and 2020/1173.

According to EU data (2017–2018), the average cost of honey production within member states was €3.90/kg, while honey imported from third countries ranges between €0.80 and €2.54/kg (From the Hives, 2023).

This enormous price gap has led to market distortions, unfair competition, consumer deception, and misleading labeling practices regarding geographical origin.

The legal conditions for applying anti-dumping duties on imported honey are fully met, yet the EU refuses to activate them — again favoring powerful commercial interests over beekeepers, consumers, and fair market principles.



3. The Absence of Traceability and the Abuse of the TRACES Certificate

Imported honey is covered by veterinary certification through the TRACES platform, as required by Regulation (EU) 2020/2235. Yet after customs clearance, the TRACES reference is not systematically retained, disclosed, or traceable along the commercial chain.

The integration of the TRACES certificate reference at the batch level, accessible to authorities and verifiable throughout the chain, would provide a strong deterrent to honey fraud. However, this has not been implemented. In many EU member states, the traceability of imported honey remains either absent or embryonic.

4. "Cooking" the Honey: How Fraudsters Upgrade Degraded Imports

Importers of degraded honey can only survive by passing official quality analyses — and they do so by "cooking" their honey. Resin filters are used to remove excess HMF (from overheating), pesticide and antibiotic residues, and even pollen grains. The absence of pollen is an advantage, as it allows the product to be mixed later with domestic honey and sold as local. Artificial enzymes (diastase, invertase) and colorants are added to mimic genuine characteristics.

Although scientific methods exist to detect such manipulations, these are not legislated, and therefore cannot be used in court.

This "technological laundering" of honey is fully known to EU authorities, but tolerated. The situation is made worse by the involvement of

certain EU-accredited laboratories that, according to the Commission's own report (From the Hives, 2023, p.7), help fraudsters adapt their blends to evade detection and falsify geographical origin.

Alarmingly, these same laboratories may simultaneously receive EU funding to develop honey testing methods, advise on legislation, and participate in the Honey Platform.

5. Consumer Deception and Market Distortion

Consumers naturally prefer domestic honey, perceiving it as superior and wishing to support local beekeepers. To overcome this distrust, importers use low prices and misleading labeling.

Cheap supermarket honey, falsely marketed as "European blend," deceives consumers and destroys confidence in honey as a genuine product. This leads to market distortion: quality honey disappears from shelves, and beekeepers cannot survive economically.

Once again, the EU has the solution, anti-dumping duties, but refuses to implement it.

6. Converting Imported Honey into "Local" Honey

Without a legal requirement for a minimum pollen content, it takes only 20 kg of local honey mixed with one tone of imported baker's honey to pass as "domestic." A realistic minimum (e.g., 30,000 pollen grains) would make such deception impossible.

This gap was recognized in the 2014 amendment to the Honey Directive, but no action was taken.

7. The Loophole of "Filtered" and "Baker's" Honey

Directive 2001/110/EC failed to define the minimum pollen content of filtered honey. The 2014 amendment (Directive 2014/63/EU) acknowledged this flaw, promising to supplement the directive "regarding the minimum pollen content." Ten years later, nothing changed.

Although the 2024 amendment (Directive 2024/1438) abolishes "filtered honey," the same loophole has been transferred to baker's honey, now defined as overheated honey or honey from which a significant portion of pollen has been removed. This product can be imported freely, without indication of origin, and once pollen is added, it can easily be marketed as "local."

The Commission's promise to define the minimum pollen content of baker's honey through a delegated act is not reassuring. We heard this promise before ten years ago.

8. Misleading Labels and Non-Enforcement of EU Regulation 1169/2011

Fraudsters frequently conceal the countries of origin among other information or images on the back label, violating EU Regulation 1169/2011, which forbids hiding or interrupting origin information.

Despite multiple reports and complaints in Greece and other member states, authorities have not acted. The absence of enforcement again plays in favor of fraudsters.

9. Weaknesses of the Honey Directive Persist

Directive 2024/1438/EU continues to suffer from the same deficiencies as Directive 2001/110/EC:

- Lack of uniform criteria for the classification of monofloral honeys.
- Method to verify the percentage of countries of harvest that should be listed on the label.
- Unfair treatment of honey varieties with naturally low enzymatic activity.
- Absence of clear contamination thresholds and unambiguous definitions.
- Failure to legislate modern analytical tools for fraud detection.

The Honey Platform, which could have corrected these gaps, has been ineffective. Since its creation, it has met only twice in 2024, focusing on secondary topics and avoiding critical issues such as traceability and legislative loopholes.

10. The EU's Shared Responsibility in the Great Honey Fraud

Europe possesses the tools, the laws, the data, and the scientific knowledge to stop honey fraud, yet it refuses to act. The problem does not stem from weak legislation but from a systemic lack of enforcement, selective inaction, and tolerance of powerful economic interests.

By failing to apply border controls, anti-dumping measures, and traceability mechanisms, and by maintaining loopholes that allow adulterated honey to enter freely the European Union has created and sustained the very conditions under which honey fraud thrives.

Beekeepers, consumers, and honest producers are paying the price for the EU's inaction. The credibility of European honey, and the survival of European apiculture, are now at stake.

It is time for the European Commission to stop tolerating deception and start enforcing its own laws. If Europe truly values authenticity, sustainability, and fair trade, it must prove it not in words, but through decisive action.

A Call to the European Commission

For too long, the European Union has turned a blind eye to one of the most systematic and damaging food frauds in its internal market. The evidence is overwhelming, the legislation is in place, and yet enforcement remains absent. This failure has allowed adulterated honey to pour into Europe, eroding consumer trust, destroying fair competition, and driving thousands of honest beekeepers out of business.

The European Commission bears a shared responsibility for this situation. By neglecting to implement the very measures it designed, from strict border controls under Regulation (EU) 2017/625 to anti-dumping duties, traceability requirements, and minimum pollen standards, it has created a permissive environment where fraudsters prosper and integrity collapses.

The time for polite reports and deferred decisions has passed. Europe cannot continue to promote sustainability and biodiversity while silently enabling the destruction of one of its most symbolic and essential agricultural sectors — beekeeping.

We call on the European Commission to:

- Enforce border inspections of all honey consignments through designated BCPs.
- Apply anti-dumping duties on imported honey below production cost.
- Mandate full traceability through the TRACES certificate at batch level.
- Define the minimum pollen content for baker's honey to prevent relabeling fraud.
- Investigate and exclude laboratories involved in facilitating adulteration.
- Ensure that the Honey Platform becomes a body of action, not complacency.

The credibility of European honey, the survival of beekeeping, and the trust of European consumers now depend on these actions.

If the European Union continues to tolerate deception in the honey market, it will not be a failure of policy — it will be a failure of principle.

Europe must decide whether it stands with truth and authenticity, or with fraud and complicity.

Andreas Thrasyvoulou

Professor of Emeritus
Aristotle University Greece

Member of EBA's Scientific Committee on the Safety and Quality of Bee Products

EXPAND THE BEEKEEPING LIBRARY

The Slovenian Beekeeping Association has its own beekeeping library with over 4,000 beekeeping publications.

We want to constantly expand the library, so we invite authors of beekeeping literature to send us a description of their publications and an offer to purchase 1 copy.

Contact
barbara.dimc@czs.si

FROM THE HELLENIC SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY OF APICULTURE-SERICULTURE

A CRY OF DESPERATION FROM GREEK BEEKEEPERS OVER THE PROHIBITION OF BEEKEEPING IN FOREST AREAS

The following open letter, submitted by the Hellenic Scientific Society of Apiculture, is addressed to all member countries of the European Beekeepers Federation (EBA). It highlights the increasing legal and administrative restrictions that threaten forest beekeeping in Greece — a situation that, as the authors warn, could soon affect beekeepers across Europe if not collectively addressed. The Society calls for solidarity, exchange of information, and joint action to protect

forest beekeeping as a vital and environmentally beneficial practice.

Beekeeping in Greece relies heavily on the ability of beekeepers to move their colonies into forested areas. Pine, fir, and oak are the three main forest tree species whose honeydew production accounts for approximately 70% of the country's annual honey yield. In addition, forested landscapes rich in heather, strawberry tree, rockrose, acacia, and others—as well as areas with Mediterranean scrub, aromatic plants (such as thyme and oregano), or legumes—serve as vital environments for colony development and for the production of many bee products.

In recent years, placing beehives in forested regions has become increasingly difficult due to various factors, such as the expansion of other human activities like tourism, but mainly because the beekeeping sector has been unjustly targeted as a major risk factor for forest fires.

As a result, Forest Services in many parts of Greece have issued Forest Prohibition Orders which, although not legally justified, impose arbitrary restrictions regarding distances from forest roads, paths, water sources, holiday houses, and other features—making it practically impossible for beekeepers to set up their hives. Moreover, they completely forbid the transfer of beehives into burnt forest areas for arbitrary periods of time (e.g., 5 or 10 years), thereby depriving forests of the valuable assistance bees provide in their natural regeneration.

Furthermore, the newly established Ministry of Climate Crisis and Civil Protection, along with the Fire Service under its supervision, has issued Fire Protection Regulations that make forest beekeeping practically impossible. For example, one article of Fire Regulation 9/2024 specifies a "minimum distance of at least ten (10) meters between hive installations and trees or bushes." Greek forests, however, are characterized by rugged terrain and dense vegetation with few clearings or mountain meadows. Consequently, this measure is unrealistic. Even if a beekeeper attempts to clear the area around the apiary, this action will violate forest protection laws prohibiting the cutting of vegetation. Thus, the regulations of one ministry directly contradict the laws of another.

Since 1998, the management of forest fires in Greece has been assigned to the Fire Service,

which lacks the specialized personnel, knowledge, and experience previously held by the Forest Service—an agency that had competently carried out this crucial responsibility for decades.

We kindly ask for your support in addressing this difficult situation faced by Greek beekeeping. We would appreciate it if you could inform us about the laws and regulations in your countries regarding the placement of beehives in forest areas—specifically for short-term exploitation of honeydew flows (10 to 30 days), and not for the establishment of permanent apiaries.

We would also like to know whether there are any specific fire-prevention regulations applicable during the summer months concerning beekeeping activities (e.g., the use of smokers), as well as any rules regarding the placement of beehives in burned forest areas.

In addition, we would be interested to learn whether beekeeping is included as an economic activity within the Forest Management Plans of your countries.

Finally, we request information about any existing legal framework governing beekeeping in urban and peri-urban areas, considering that many European capitals and large cities are adjacent to, or even developed within, forested zones.

This issue is not only a Greek problem—it concerns all European beekeepers. If the false perception that bees and beekeepers represent a threat to forests becomes established, similar restrictions could soon spread to other EU countries. Forest ecosystems, biodiversity, and pollination services are shared European assets. Protecting the right to practice sustainable beekeeping within forests is, therefore, a common responsibility. The collaboration of all EBA member states is essential to ensure that beekeeping remains recognized as a vital, environmentally beneficial, and irreplaceable activity for the health of our natural landscapes.

For further communication on this matter, please contact:

Hellenic Scientific Society of Apiculture
Greece

President: Sofia Gounari – sgounari@fria.gr
Secretary: Andreas Thrasyvoulou –
thrasia@agro.auth.gr

SUPPORT PER HIVE

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

As you have been informed, EU Commissioner Mr. Hansen has proposed changes in the implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy. As part of this, he also proposed that beekeepers can also be paid support per beehive from environmental funds – for the pollination service of bees.

In September, this proposal was presented to the AGRI Committee. The procedure is continuing in the EU Parliament. The proposal is expected to be adopted either at the end of 2025 or at the beginning of 2026. This will be followed by the "bureaucratic" part of the procedure, and its inclusion in national regulations. Realistically, this could be arranged in the middle of 2026.

As soon as there is new information, we will publish it on the EBA website and in EBA MAGAZINE.

Boštjan Noč
President of the EBA

SUSTAINABLE AND SUCCESSFUL BEEKEEPING THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

With climate change and the growing pollution of nature caused by the widespread use of insecticides, pesticides, and herbicides in agriculture—as well as hive contamination from chemical treatments against Varroa mites—beekeeping has become an increasingly risky and less profitable activity. I'm afraid it's no longer really a profession, nor even a hobby, but rather something that borders on a diagnosis.

In the past, it was enough simply to keep the bees alive and healthy to achieve satisfying yields. I used to joke that successful beekeeping required four things—two to have and two not to have:

- a good apiary location and a good queen,
- and not to have Varroa or Nosema.

Today everything has changed—and not for the better. A beekeeper must now be knowledgeable, follow the latest research, and try to apply it in practice. Still, generally speaking, following the basic rules throughout the year is the foundation of success.

Prerequisites for Successful Beekeeping

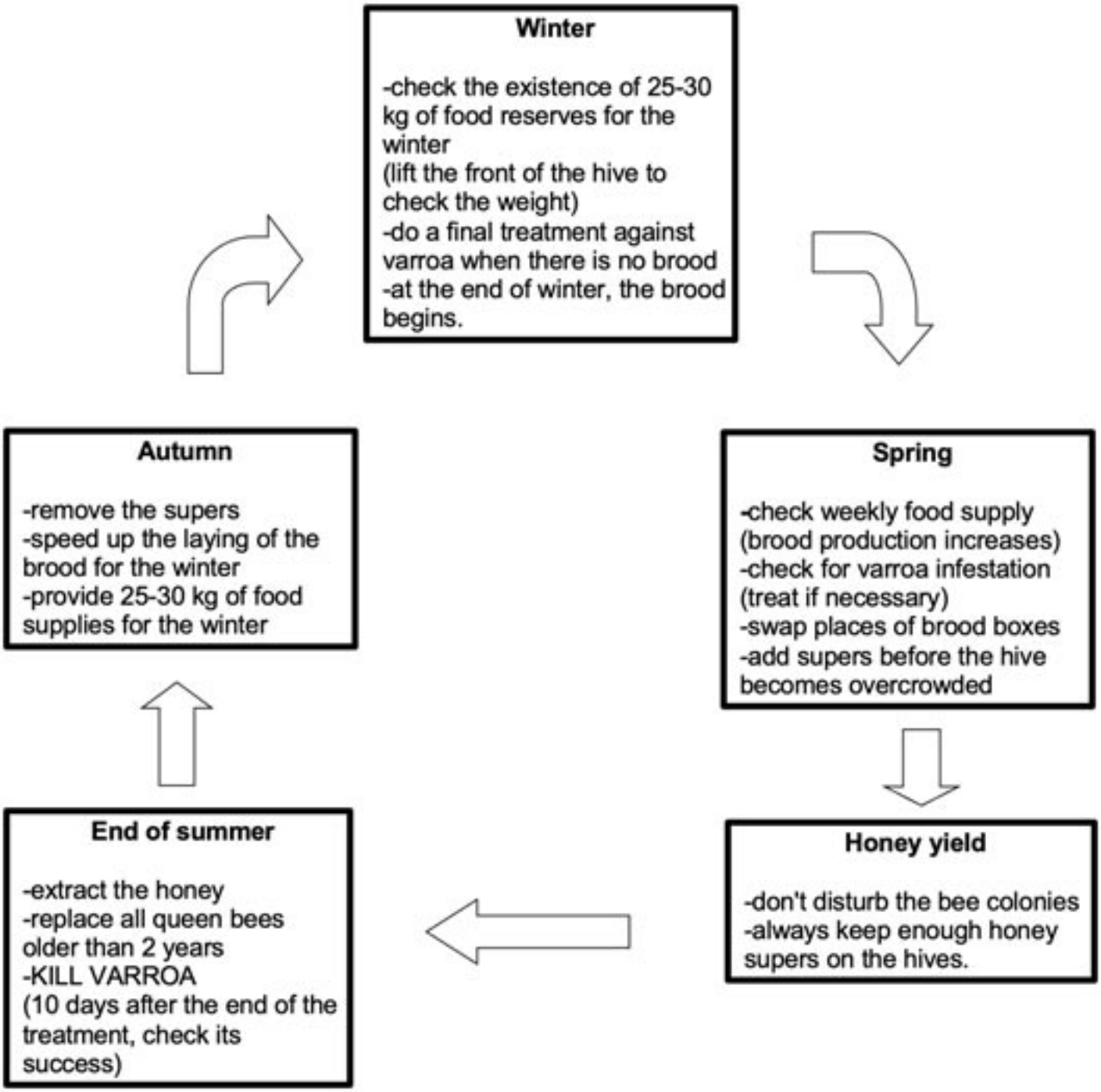
To keep bees successfully, several basic conditions must be met:

- A good location for the apiary
- A strong and healthy colony
- A young and productive queen
- Favorable nectar and pollen sources
- Proper management methods suited to the type of hive used

In beekeeping literature, you'll find many recommendations on how to work with different hive types. While management techniques vary slightly depending on the model—Dadant - Blatt, Langstroth, or Farrar—the general principles remain the same for all hives.

Remember the 7 golden rules of "number 7"

- At the end of the 7th month, the 7 most important weeks for success in beekeeping begin.
- Disband colonies in early August with less than 7 hives
- If the colony has 7 frames of brood in August, it is successfully prepared for the winter.
- If the colony has 7 frames occupied by bees and 7 frames full of honey in October, it is



successfully prepared for the winter.

- Until the colony has occupied 7 frames, do not expand the brood by adding a empty frame.
- Until the colony has 7 frames of brood, do not expand the brood by adding foundations or boxes.
- When the colony has brought 7 frames of honey, add a super below the hive.

(These rules apply to the LR hive. For the DB hive replace the number 7 with the number 5, and for the Farrar hive with the number 9.)

The Beekeeping Calendar

To achieve consistent results year after year, beekeepers need more than just a simple calendar that tells them what and when to do something. They must understand the life cycles of bees, the Varroa mite, and other bee parasites. It's also crucial to understand the relationships between food reserves, the amount of brood, swarming tendencies, and queen replacement.

I'll try to present these concepts as simply as possible. Let's start with the basics.

Maintain Strong Colonies

This is the first and most fundamental rule of beekeeping. Weak colonies are exactly that—weak. They won't produce a honey yield and may even collapse.

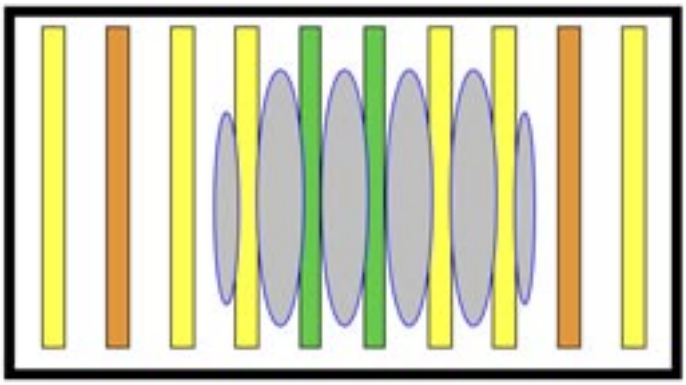
To enable a colony to reach the desired strength, it must have enough space for brood rearing. Strong colonies require:

- one full Dadant - Blatt (DB) brood chamber, or
- two Langstroth (LR) boxes, or
- three Farrar boxes.

That's the minimum amount of space necessary for colonies at any time of the year.

The number of bees in a strong colony varies throughout the year. In May, there can be over 50,000 bees, while in January, the number may drop below 15,000. It's obviously impossible to count bees directly, so instead we count how many frames (or "streets") are covered with bees.

Example:



The upper picture shows a winter cluster occupying four full frames—around 20,000 bees. Because the cluster tends to be oval in shape, the two outer frames are only half-covered and aren't counted.

The table below defines how many frames covered with bees constitute a strong colony at different times of the year.

Time of Year	DB Hive	LR Hive	Farrar Hive
January	4+	5+	7+
March	6+ (min 3)	8+ (min 4)	12+ (min 6)
May	11+	14+	21+
October	8+ (min 4)	10+ (min 5)	15+ (min 6)

In spring and autumn, any colony occupying fewer than half the recommended frames for its hive type should be combined with another.

Strong colonies should have, at the start of the main nectar flow, approximately:

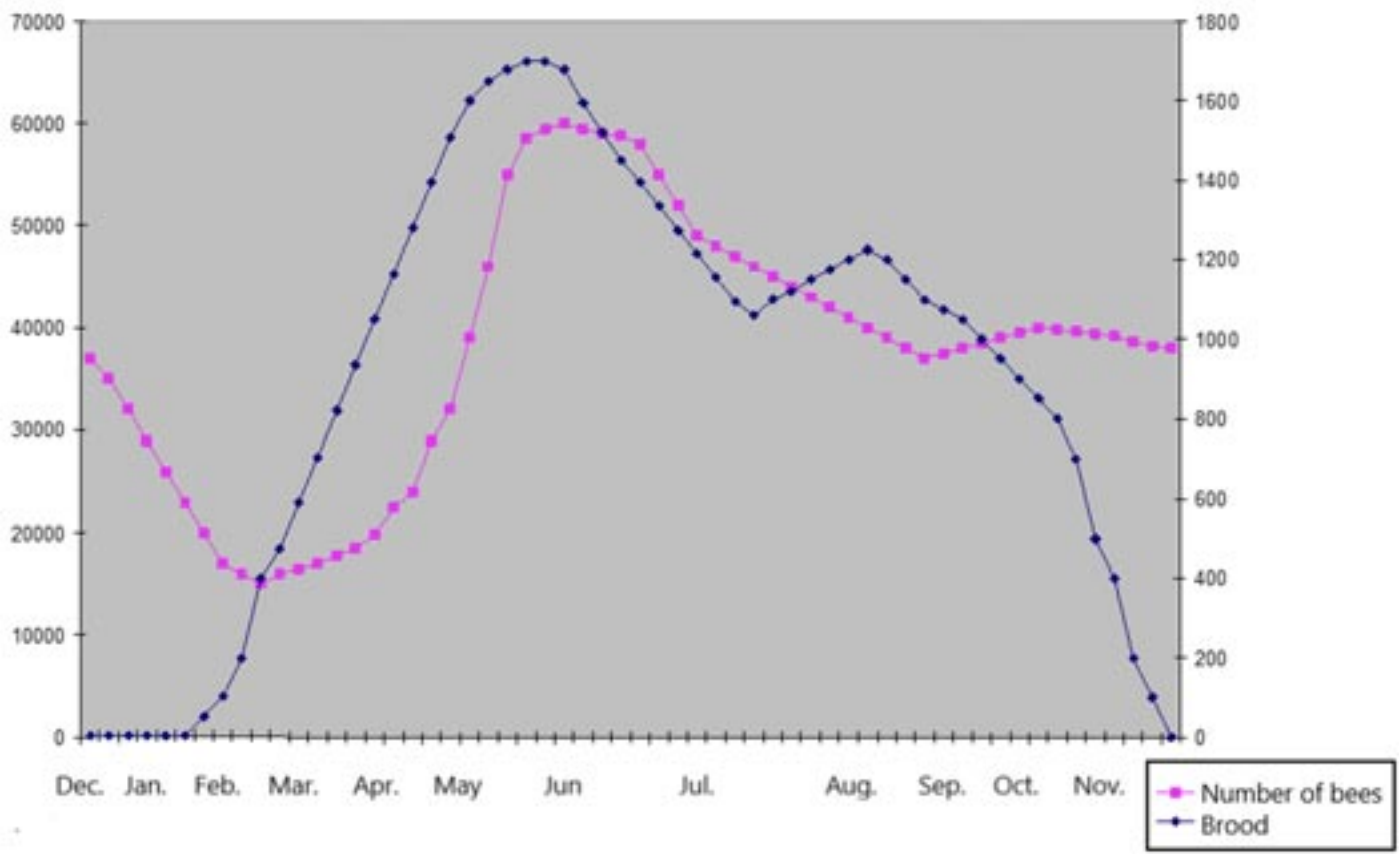
- 8 brood frames in a Dadant hive,
- 10 brood frames in a Langstroth hive, or
- 15 brood frames in a Farrar hive.

Date	DB Hive	LR Hive	Farrar Hive
March 15	2 frames	3 frames	5 frames
March 22	3 frames	4 frames	6 frames
April 1	4 frames	5 frames	8 frames
April 10	5 frames	6 frames	9 frames
April 20	7 frames	8 frames	12 frames

In Serbia, the black locust (acacia) flow usually begins around May 7, so to achieve the maximum number of bees for that flow, the brood development schedule should look roughly like on the last table.

Brood Development, Bee Population, and Disease Control

Brood Rearing and Bee Numbers



The upper chart (Diagram 1) shows that by early December, brood rearing has stopped, and there is usually no brood at all in December (blue line). The red line shows the number of adult bees declining during winter, but not as sharply as one might expect given the halt in brood production. This is because winter bees—which emerge in the autumn—live much longer than summer bees. They aren't worn out by foraging and are physiologically adapted to survive the cold season. Notice that in January, brood rearing begins again with a sharp increase. Look at the right side of the diagram—the column showing the number of eggs laid per day. You'll see that the queen starts modestly, laying fewer than 100 eggs daily. As the days grow longer, this signals the colony to prepare for spring and the first nectar flow, so the queen rapidly intensifies her egg laying.

The chart also shows another rise in brood rearing at the end of summer. If, by mid-August, the queen hasn't produced several frames of brood, feed the colony with a stimulating pollen substitute patty (or, ideally, real pollen) to encourage brood expansion. The goal is to raise as many young, healthy bees as possible before winter.

Diseases

Use medications only when necessary and only if they're approved for use in beekeeping.

We won't go deeply into bee diseases here, since their accurate diagnosis requires laboratory testing, even for the most common ones—such as Nosema, Acarapidosis (tracheal mite infestation), and American or European foulbrood.

You'll quickly learn to recognize healthy brood by its pearly white appearance in open

cells and by the smooth, domed cappings of sealed brood.

If you notice older bees with K-shaped, spread wings, or see that open brood cells have changed color, cappings of sealed brood are sunken or perforated, or the brood pattern looks patchy and irregular, send a brood sample to a veterinary laboratory for analysis.

The Varroa mite is the only parasite for which we regularly use medication.

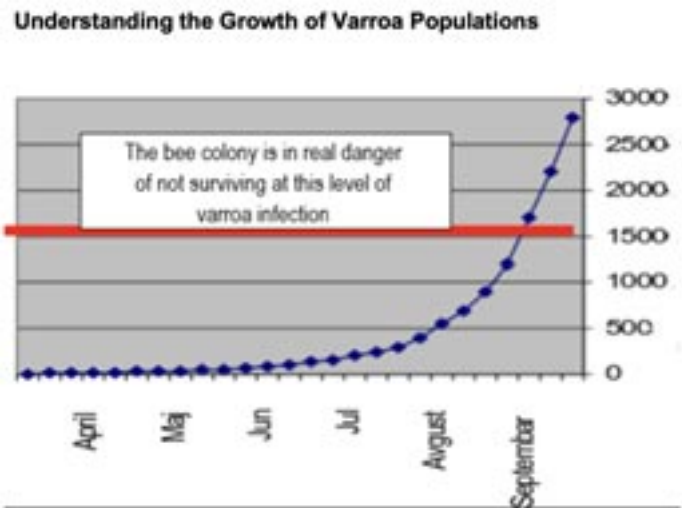
Perhaps we've been lucky, but I believe that our bees—both domestic and feral—now display greater hygienic behavior than they did twenty years ago. (Hygienic behavior means removing diseased or abnormal brood, regardless of whether it's infected by disease or infested by Varroa mites.)

This is both a natural adaptation to the Varroa parasite and a result of selective breeding by queen breeders.

Only colonies that show a certain level of hygienic behavior can survive under today's conditions.

Varroa Mite

THE SURVIVAL OF YOUR COLONY AND NEXT YEAR'S HONEY YIELD DEPEND ON SUMMER VARROA TREATMENT.



It's vital for beekeepers to understand how and why Varroa infestations explode during summer.

Varroa mites need brood to reproduce. When abundant brood is available and temperatures rise in spring, the Varroa population can double every three weeks. In early spring, doubling from 50 to 100 mites—or even from 200 to 400—may seem insignificant. But because chemical treatments can't be used right before or during the honey flow, Varroa has months to multiply unchecked.

A strong colony may tolerate up to 1,500 mites, but if reproduction continues, it will eventually collapse. Upper diagram illustrates how exponential growth leads to catastrophic infestation levels. Even if you start with only 100 mites in March, the population can reach deadly levels by September. Even if such a colony makes it into autumn, Varroa will so severely weaken the brood that the winter bees born from it won't survive through winter.

Monitoring Varroa Levels

The recommended method for monitoring infestation is to install a screened bottom board with sticky paper and count naturally fallen mites over a period of three to five days.

If the daily average is:

- 1 mite per day — treat once every three months.
- 2 mites per day — treat every two months.
- More than 8 mites per day — treatment is required immediately.

Control During the Honey Season

During honey collection, use formic acid or thymol-based preparations immediately after extracting honey, typically in mid-June. Thymol

isn't a poison; it leaves minimal residue, reduces the chance of Varroa developing resistance, and is very effective.

For newly formed swarms, treat once before the new queen's brood is capped, spraying all brood frames and bees with oxalic or lactic acid.

Conduct your own research and choose the treatment method that suits your system best. But always remember: Varroa reaches its peak in summer.

Importance of Healthy Autumn Brood

It's easy to see why healthy autumn brood is essential. This brood must produce adult bees strong enough to survive the winter and nurse the first brood of the following year. If the autumn brood is infested with Varroa, those bees will be too weak to perform these duties. A colony heavily infested with Varroa in autumn is in serious danger of dying before spring.

Rotating Treatments

Use different medications cyclically to reduce the risk of Varroa developing resistance.

Currently, I use:

- Formic acid in summer,
- Insecticidal strips in August, and
- Oxalic acid in winter.

All options are valid—just make sure to read the product instructions carefully before treatment. Summer treatments with formic acid or thymol, combined with a Varroa mesh floor, can sometimes be so effective that an August treatment isn't even needed—though skipping it is still not recommended.

Late Summer (August): Preparing Colonies for Winter

The beekeeping year doesn't begin with the calendar year. It actually starts in early August, when one season ends and the next begins. At this time, several key tasks must be completed to prepare colonies for successful overwintering.

Planning for the Upcoming Season

You need a strong, healthy colony that can make use of every possible late-summer nectar flow. This is also the time to begin reorganizing frames and hive boxes for autumn and winter. Start by removing empty supers and reducing the hive to its minimum winter configuration:

- 1 box for a Dadant hive,
- 2 boxes for a Langstroth hive,
- 3 boxes for a Farrar hive.

Move partially filled frames upward for storing autumn honey, and leave several empty combs in the center of the lower box to give the queen room to lay eggs.

Beekeeper's Tasks for August

- Extract honey.
- Strengthen colonies so each has at least:
  - 5 brood frames in a Dadant hive,
  - 7 in a Langstroth hive,
  - 10 in a Farrar hive.
- Strengthen weak colonies by merging them with smaller ones that have:
  - fewer than 3 brood frames in Dadant,
  - 4 in Langstroth,
  - or 6 in Farrar.
- After combining, rearrange the hive as follows:
  - Place a box of empty extracted frames on the bottom board.
  - Above it, add the box with brood frames without honey caps.
  - On top, place a box containing at least six brood or ex-brood frames with honey caps.
- In 10- or 12-frame hives, remove two frames per box to create space between the frames and the hive walls. Keep the bottom entrance open.
- After the bees have cleaned the extracted frames, leave one half-super with partially filled

combs of honey on top of Dadant hives. For Langstroth hives, leave one full box, and for Farrar hives, two empty boxes with drawn comb below the brood chamber (on the bottom board).

Melt down all old or dark comb, keeping only clean, light, drawn comb. This means:

- Dadant hives overwinter with one half-super,
- Langstroth hives as three-story hives,
- and Farrar hives as five-story hives.

- If pollen reserves are insufficient, feed colonies pollen substitute patties or patties made with real pollen.
- Feed colonies with sugar syrup (3 parts sugar to 2 parts water) in several large feedings — about 3–4 liters per feeding — until sufficient winter stores are secured:
  - at least 12 half Dadant frames,
  - 8 Langstroth frames, or
  - 12 Farrar frames of sealed honey.
- When the bees begin drawing burr comb between frames and side walls, that usually means they've stored enough food for winter.

Avoid stimulative feeding with syrup in late summer, as it encourages unnecessary egg laying and produces too many short-lived summer bees.

After finishing syrup feeding, add about 2 kilograms (4.4 pounds) of candy (bee patty) so bees can properly seal and cap honey frames for winter.

- Begin Varroa mite treatment:
  - Place two medicated strips (impregnated with an approved acaricide) in the hive for 5–6 weeks,
  - or fumigate with amitraz at least five times, twice a week.

Autumn (September, October, November)

Environmental Conditions

- Weather gradually shifts from warm to mild temperatures.
- Food reserves: colonies should collect by mid-September at least 20 kilograms (44 pounds) of honey—equivalent to one half-super plus two or three brood frames in a Dadant hive, or ten full

honey frames in a Langstroth. Farrar hives should have about 13 honey frames in total.

Usually, autumn provides enough nectar for winter stores—and sometimes even a surplus.

If not, feed colonies by the end of September with thicker syrup (2:1) to fill the top box.

Early Autumn (September)

Bee Activities

○ Autumn brood rearing:

Summer Varroa treatment is crucial for ensuring healthy brood in autumn.

A high mite concentration in autumn damages young bees, and too few may remain for the colony to survive the winter.

The intensity of autumn brood rearing determines the number of winter bees.

The more young bees in autumn, the more adult bees will be available for early spring brood rearing.

The queen begins to sharply reduce egg laying in October.

○ Food reserves:

Bees work diligently to gather as much nectar as possible, while reducing its water content.

Once the nectar is placed into cells, bees move it, fan it, and ripen it into honey for winter.

Beekeeper's Tasks in Early Autumn

○ Ensure that each colony has 10 or more frames covered with bees—count only the full streets, not those half-filled.

Colonies with fewer than 4–5 covered frames early in autumn will likely need to be merged with others.

As Farrar used to say: "Plan your winter losses in the autumn."

○ Maintain 3 to 4 brood frames and abundant food stores in early autumn.

If you don't see enough eggs laid by early September, feed 1:1 syrup to stimulate the queen

to lay more eggs. Aim to keep at least three Langstroth frames with brood continuously during this laying period.

○ Check the hive arrangement for winter:

○ Honey and pollen should be on top,

○ Brood should be below.

○ By early autumn, the outermost frames in the lower box should be full of honey.

○ If the queen hasn't moved into the lower box by September, transfer all brood frames there.

○ If the top box isn't full enough, feed the colony and finish feeding by the end of

October

By mid-October, perform the final autumn inspection and prepare colonies for winter:

○ Protect the apiary from strong winter winds.

○ Reorganize frames in Langstroth and Farrar hives, raising one or two frames of the youn-

gest brood into the top box with honey frames.

This helps colonies form a winter cluster properly.

○ Close the bottom entrance, leaving open only the middle entrance on the hive body.

○ Treat colonies against Nosema twice, three to four days apart, using syrup mixed with a disinfectant.

November

At the end of November, carry out the final Varroa treatment:

○ Drip 5 ml of a solution per occupied frame, prepared by dissolving 75 g of oxalic acid in 1 liter of distilled water and 1 kilogram of sugar.

Do not exceed 50 ml per colony.

After treatment, close the middle entrance and open only the upper entrance.

Winter (December, January, February)

Conditions

○ Weather: Days are short and nights are long. Although the average daily temperature is too low for foraging, it's rare that two or three weeks pass without at least one warm enough day for bees to take a cleansing flight (healthy bees never defecate inside the hive).

It's not unusual to have several consecutive warm days when bees venture out searching for food.

Fresh pollen invigorates the queen and provides good prospects for spring development.

○ Food storage: One of the beekeeper's key autumn tasks is to ensure that each hive contains at least 20 kilograms (44 pounds) of stored food before the cold sets in.

Hives should feel heavy by late autumn.

Because brood rearing is minimal during winter, food consumption remains low until late winter when the queen starts laying more eggs.

Bee Activities

○ The Winter Cluster:

Bees don't hibernate. Instead, they form a cluster to survive cold weather.

When the temperature drops below 12°C (54°F), bees stay inside the hive.

As temperatures continue to fall, the cluster tightens and produces heat through rapid muscle vibrations (bees can vibrate their wing muscles

without moving their wings). If any brood is present, it's located in the center of the cluster.

In a strong colony, the outer shell of the cluster is about 5 cm thick and acts as insulation.

This helps retain heat and prevents energy loss to the cold surroundings.

Bees from the cluster's core continuously rotate with those on the outer edge, so no bee freezes to death.

Even when it's below freezing outside, bees maintain a temperature of about 34°C (93°F) inside the brood area of the cluster.

○ Brood Rearing:

In coastal regions, brood rearing rarely stops completely; colonies often maintain brood about the size of a human palm on one or two frames.

In continental regions, brood rearing usually ceases entirely for part of the winter.

By mid-January, brood rearing either begins or intensifies as preparation for spring.

○ Bee Numbers:

As shown earlier (Diagram 1), brood rearing and the number of bees both decline until midwinter.

As days lengthen, the queen gradually increases egg laying.

At first, brood size is limited by the number of old bees available to keep it warm.

Later, once young bees emerge, brood quantity becomes limited only by available honey and pollen stores.

Beekeeper's Tasks

○ If everything was done properly at the end of summer and in autumn, there isn't much work around the hives now.

In early December, perform a three-day mite count using a sticky board or screened bottom insert.

If needed, treat the colony accordingly.

Occasionally lift the back of the hive to estimate its weight—if you don't have a hive scale, this helps ensure there's still enough food.

○ Prepare pollen substitute patties (candy) for the first spring feeding:

Mix:

○ 25 kg of powdered sugar

○ 3 kg of raw baker's yeast

○ 1 kg of powdered whey

○ 25 crushed 500 mg tablets of vitamin C

○ 25 grams of sea salt

○ Optionally, add at least 2% ground pollen (but never pollen from other apiaries).

Mix half the sugar with all the yeast until you get a yogurt-like paste, then add the other ingredients and the remaining dry sugar.

Stir until the consistency is right for molding into patties.

○ This is also the time to plan for the coming season:

○ How many hives do you want to manage?

○ How much equipment (frames, foundations, hive bodies) will you need?

○ Do you plan to order new nucleus colonies or queens?

○ Once these decisions are made, order the required materials and start preparing your gear for the new season.

It's always useful to have an empty hive ready, since stray swarms sometimes appear unexpectedly.

○ By late January, or preferably early February, after the first cleansing flight, begin placing pollen substitute patties on the inner cover mesh.

Keep feeding until the bees start bringing in

natural pollen from outside. Insulate hives by placing several layers of newspaper above the patties inside the cover.

Inspect every two weeks:

○ If the colony has consumed about two-thirds of a patty, add a new one.

○ Replace any moist paper with dry sheets.

Varroa Mite in Winter

Varroa reproduces inside capped brood cells, so reproduction stops or nearly stops in winter.

Adult mites cling to adult bees and feed on their body fat, much like leeches sucking blood.

When conditions allow, winter treatments can be very effective, since very few mites remain hidden under brood cappings.

Planning for the Coming Season

It takes at least 8–9 weeks for a colony to reach full strength—around 50,000 bees—for the main honey flow.

Bees need large amounts of brood that they can cover and warm.

If there are too many bees but not enough brood, feed the colony with pollen patties to stimulate egg laying.

Development Timeline

Each stage lasts roughly three weeks:

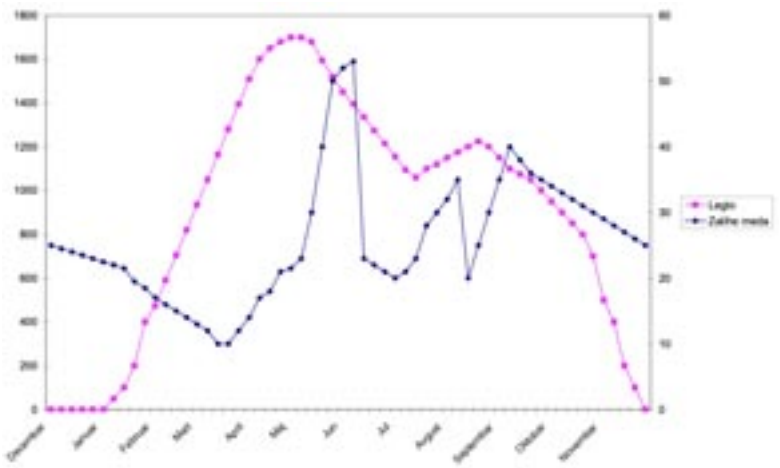
○ The bee spends three weeks in the brood cell (egg, larva, pupa),

○ Then another three weeks as a nurse/house bee before becoming a forager.

This means that six weeks after the egg is laid, the bee finally becomes productive.

That's why a strong increase in brood rearing must occur in February—so that the colony reaches full foraging strength by late April, when the main nectar flows begin.

Early Spring (March and April)



Factors Affecting Colony Development in Early Spring

○ The initial number of adult bees determines how much brood can be heated and fed.

If the colony population is small by midwinter, development in early spring will be very slow.

○ A shortage of honey stores can limit brood rearing.

During midwinter and early spring, colonies often consume more food for brood production than they can gather.

○ The number of favorable foraging days influences brood rearing intensity.

Fresh pollen and nectar accelerate brood production.

When cold or rainy weather keeps bees inside, they must rely on stored honey and pollen reserves.

○ The amount of nectar and pollen available on foraging days also affects brood rearing.

Flowering in early spring is sporadic.

Diagram 2 shows how food reserves de-

February	March				April			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
From egg to hatching			Young house bee			Foraging bee		
	From egg to hatching			Young house bee			Foraging bee	
		From egg to hatching			Young house bee			Foraging bee

crease sharply once brood rearing begins. Hive stores should never drop below 7–8 kilograms (about 15–18 pounds) of honey.

Check food reserves weekly, and feed colonies if necessary.

Conditions

○ Weather: March is usually unstable, but the first warm and sunny days appear.

By April, cold and rainy days are largely behind us.

○ Food stores: Monitoring honey and pollen reserves remains crucial until the first major nectar flow.

As spring progresses, more forage becomes available, but colonies still consume more than they collect because brood rearing is intense.

○ Watch carefully for signs of swarming, especially for the appearance of queen cells.

Bee Activities

○ A colony's first priority is always survival—maintaining enough bees and food reserves.

Once the bees "feel" that their numbers are sufficient for survival, they begin preparing for reproduction, meaning swarming.

They can be extremely determined about this, despite the beekeeper's best efforts to stop them.

○ Brood rearing:

To reach maximum population by early May, when the main nectar flow (black locust) begins, the queen must lay eggs intensively from March onward.

This requires the beekeeper to ensure several conditions are met:

○ Maintain adequate food reserves in the hive.

○ Keep most of the brood in the lower box by reversing hive bodies (in Langstroth and Farrar hives).

○ Place at least four high-quality drawn combs in the middle of the upper box so brood can expand upward.

○ Add new boxes before bees begin to feel crowded.

○ Bee population:

In early spring, the colony rapidly expands its population. When the hive becomes crowded and honey reserves seem sufficient, bees start preparing to swarm.

If the beekeeper prevents swarming before or during the main nectar flow (rapeseed or acacia), the bees will redirect their efforts toward collecting nectar instead.

This often results in a much larger honey yield.

Beekeeper's Tasks

○ Check food reserves every week.

○ Rearrange frames or boxes every two weeks so the brood remains in the lower chamber.

○ Follow the "rule of seven":

○ When a colony occupies 7 frames with bees, expand the nest by adding another drawn comb.

○ When the colony has 7 brood frames, enlarge the brood chamber by adding foundation frames or another box.

○ When bees store honey on 7 frames, add a new honey super below the existing one.

Mid-March (when the cherry plum blooms)

○ Turn brood frames 180 degrees (rear side to the front) to stimulate movement and expansion.

○ Start stimulative feeding with syrup (1 part sugar to 1 part water) mixed with FORSAPIN twice weekly (0.5 liters per feeding), continuing until the acacia bloom.

○ Perform a test treatment for Varroa; if mites are detected, treat the entire apiary with amitraz smoke, five times total, twice per week.

Late March (when plum trees bloom)

○ Colonies that have filled the upper box with bees and have at least 6 brood frames should have their boxes reversed—move the empty upper box above the brood box.

○ Continue stimulative feeding (1:1 syrup with FORSAPIN) twice weekly until the acacia flow.

○ For strong colonies that have begun drawing burr comb between frames and side walls, insert one foundation frame next to the brood on the warmer (southern) side.

Mid-April

○ Reverse hive bodies again for colonies that have filled the upper box and have at least 6 brood frames.

○ For weaker colonies (fewer than 4 brood frames), rotate brood frames 180 degrees (rear side to front).

○ Continue feeding with syrup (1:1 with FORSAPIN) twice weekly until the acacia flow.

○ Add one foundation frame on each side of the brood in strong colonies.

Late April (when apple trees bloom)

It's time for a general spring inspection to determine which colonies are production-ready for the upcoming nectar flows.

○ Colonies with 8 or more brood frames are production colonies ready for the honey flow.

○ Colonies with 5–7 brood frames need to be strengthened to reach production strength.

○ Colonies with fewer than 5 brood frames are support colonies used for making nucleus hives or boosting others.

Tasks:

○ Strengthen production colonies to at least 8 brood frames, combining weaker colonies if necessary.

○ Leave weak colonies with a queen and at least one brood frame for use in making nucleus colonies (nucs).

○ Begin raising queen cells for mating nuclei, either by grafting or using the Miller method (without grafting).

Varroa in Early Spring

As the weather improves and brood area expands, Varroa mites reproduce rapidly.

If treatment wasn't done earlier, March 1 is the last possible date to start it, so it finishes before the nectar flow.

All medications must be removed before placing honey supers on the hives.

Season Preparation

Inspect each hive thoroughly at the end of April.

The goal is to have the colony in peak condition when the acacia (black locust) begins to bloom:

○ The bottom box should serve as the brood chamber (below a queen excluder).

○ At least two honey supers should be placed above it.

Main Honey Flow (May, June, and July)

Conditions

○ Weather:

Conditions are generally favorable, and the appearance of white comb (freshly drawn wax) begins around late April.

By the end of May, the main acacia flow is usually over.

In some regions, nectar flows continue into June and even July — typically from meadow

flowers or sunflower.

○ Food Stores:

This is the season when bees collect more nectar than they need for survival.

If you have a strong colony (some even reach 12 brood frames) at the start of the flow and enough boxes for nectar storage, you can expect an average yield of at least 25 kilograms (55 pounds) of honey per production hive.

On very good sites, yields can exceed 50 kilograms (110 pounds).

The key to high honey production is:

○ a strong colony,
○ minimal Varroa infestation, and
○ plenty of storage space in the hive.

Bee Activities

○ The primary goal of the colony is to collect as much nectar as possible.

Swarming becomes a secondary goal, but it can still occur if the hive becomes overcrowded.

○ Brood rearing reaches its peak early in the nectar flow, in line with the queen's egg-laying capacity.

A good queen may lay up to 2,000 eggs per day, though 1,600–1,800 is more typical.

○ The number of bees in the hive is at its highest during the flow.

Remember:

If the colony population isn't close to its maximum during the main flow, the bees will end up using your honey to raise new brood.

A strong colony early in the season increases the risk of swarming, so careful management is essential.

Watch for signs of swarm preparation, especially the appearance of swarm queen cells at the bottom of frames in late April and May.

If a swarm leaves, you lose half your foragers — and half your honey yield.

Beekeeper's Tasks

○ Use weak colonies to form nucleus colonies (nucs) with one or two brood frames and one honey frame.

○ In early May, move production colonies to acacia pastures.

○ Repack Langstroth hives into three boxes and Farrar hives into four, moving the brood chamber to the bottom board to prepare for the acacia flow.

○ Add new boxes before the bees feel crowded, ensuring they always have space for nectar storage.

○ Avoid disturbing the colonies unnecessarily.

You may rearrange boxes or check space, but don't open brood chambers unless there's a serious issue like swarming.

○ Keep extra supers on hives during strong nectar flows.

Even if some combs end up empty later, bees need enough room for nectar ripening and evaporation.

Swarming Control

The best way to prevent swarming is to requeen in autumn of the previous year.

Colonies with young queens are much less likely to swarm.

Even then, you must rearrange frames or boxes every few weeks to keep brood in the lowest chamber.

And always add a new box before the colony becomes crowded.

Pay attention to early warning signs: If you find around ten swarm queen cells near the bottom bars, a swarm is imminent.

Destroying them rarely works — it's usually a losing battle.

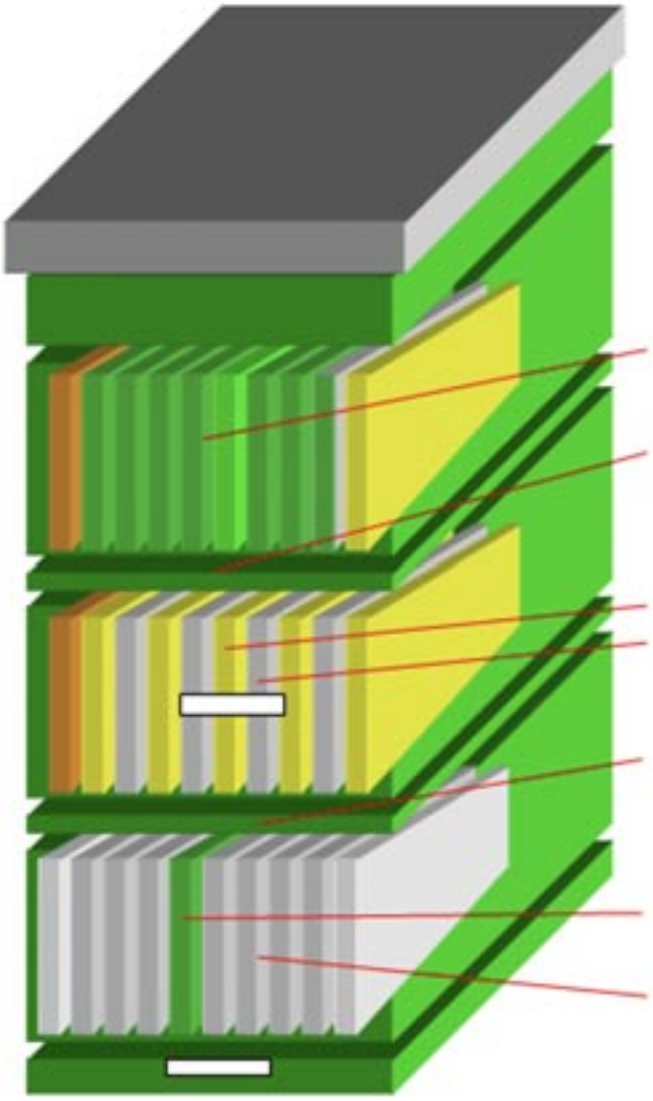
Instead, use the Modified Demaree Method, which imitates natural swarming by separating the queen and nurse bees from the brood.

Modified Demaree Method for Swarm Control

1. Remove all hive boxes and set them aside.

2. On the bottom board, place one box containing:

○ one frame of honey and pollen,
○ one frame of open brood,
○ and fill the rest with drawn comb or foundation.



- Rear entrance (open)
- Brood nest and queen cells below
- Queen excluder
- Honey supers above
- Empty comb frames above the honey area
- Queen excluder again (if two queens)
- One brood frame with queen below

Empty frames and brood structure arranged as shown in diagrams

3. Place the queen in this bottom box, then add a queen excluder on top.

If you can't find the queen, shake all bees from the brood frames into this bottom box before installing the excluder.

Once she's inside, she can't leave.

4. In the second box, place frames of drawn comb in the center and some honey at the sides.

Some beekeepers add another excluder above this box, which is also acceptable.

If the box lacks an entrance, create a small one by placing a 10 mm spacer frame between boxes, leaving an opening at the front.

5. Place all brood frames (with or without swarm cells) in the top box. If there's too much brood for one box, distribute sealed brood into the middle of the second or third box.

6. After five days, inspect the top box and leave two best queen cells with the most royal jelly, removing all others.

7. With luck, the bees and queen will believe the colony has already swarmed.

They'll work intensively to fill supers with nectar while rearing a new queen.

You can then either:

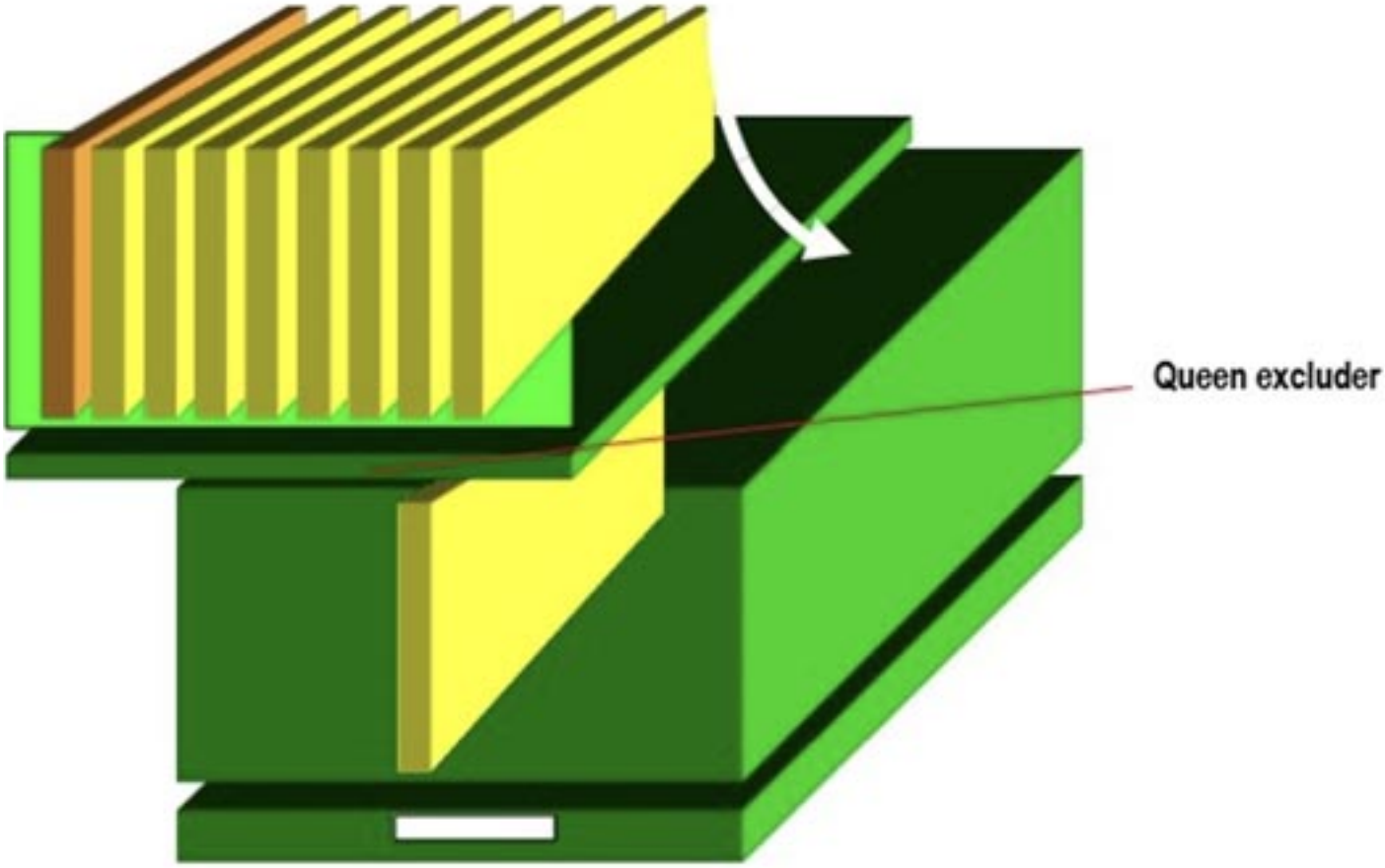
○ form a new nucleus colony with the young queen, or

○ replace the old queen with the new one before the main flow, creating an exceptionally strong colony.

Finding the Queen

The queen is usually on the brood frame that the bees re-cluster around first after smoke is applied.

You can also use an empty box and queen excluder to locate her:



1. Place an empty box on the hive cover or a spare bottom board.

2. Put a queen excluder on it, offset by three frame widths from the top box.

3. Move brood frames one by one from the upper box into the empty one, checking for the queen.

4. If you don't see her, shake the bees from each frame into the upper box before moving the frame down.

5. Continue until all brood frames (now without bees) are moved down or until you find the queen.

6. If you still can't find her, cover the bottom box with the excluder, replace the upper box, and apply a bit of smoke above the excluder.

The worker bees will quickly move down to the brood, but the queen will remain trapped on top of the excluder.

Late May — Moving to the Second Acacia Flow

By the end of May, move production colonies to secondary acacia sites (regions where acacia blooms later). At the end of May or early June, just before the new queen emerges, insert a queen excluder between the third and fourth boxes and, if possible, turn the upper box so its entrance faces backward.

This increases the chances of successful mating and safe return of the new queen.

Mid-June — After the Young Queen Starts Laying

○ Extract honey.

○ Remove the upper queen excluder and form a dual-queen colony, with the newly mated queen occupying the upper hive body.

Late June

○ Create new nucleus colonies (nucs) with two brood frames and the old queen, using them as support colonies for strengthening weak hives in August.

○ Reorganize the hive by moving the young queen's brood box to the bottom board and removing the excluder.

○ Move production hives to sunflower fields for the next nectar flow.

Varroa Monitoring in Early Summer

Use sticky boards or screened bottom inserts in late May or early June to monitor mite fall.

If you count more than 8 fallen mites per day, the colony is dangerously infested.

At that point, you must decide whether to:

○ keep supers on for honey collection, or

○ remove them and start treatment immediately.

Delaying treatment risks losing the colony entirely.

Treat by placing in both brood boxes (those with queens) a Trulex cloth or corrugated cardboard strip soaked with 50 ml of 60% formic acid, directly over the brood frames.

Planning Ahead

○ Prepare for honey extraction in advance.

○ Plan your Varroa control strategy for the summer: choose and order the required medications, sugar powder, or hardware (screened bottom boards).

Late Summer (Late July and Early August): Post-Harvest Management and Next Season Preparation

Conditions

○ Weather: Typically hot and dry, with few or no rainfalls.

○ Food stores: Leave at least 4–5 honey frames for the summer dearth period when natural nectar is scarce.

Bee Activities

○ Bees often form a “beard” and hang outside the hive entrance to cool the hive during heat waves.

Instead of collecting nectar, many foragers switch to carrying water into the hive, spreading droplets on combs to cool it through evaporation.

Other bees line up along the entrance with their heads facing inward, fanning their wings to create airflow, effectively ventilating the hive.

○ Brood rearing: As nectar sources decline, the queen reduces egg laying, and brood production decreases.

○ Bee population: The number of bees remains high, but the nectar flow has stopped.

Beekeeper's Tasks

○ Extract honey as soon as possible after the last nectar flow.

Leave enough capped honey for the bees to survive through August, when foraging is minimal.

○ Place extracted combs back on the hives temporarily so the bees can clean them out, then remove empty supers once they're cleaned.

Do not leave more boxes on the hive than the bees can cover with their cluster.

○ Monitor Varroa infestation closely, and treat immediately if necessary.

Use sticky boards, screened bottom inserts, or other methods—just don't delay.

Everything may appear fine in July: many bees and full combs of honey, apparently ready for winter.

But Varroa mites can remain hidden in brood cells and on the underside of bees, silently multiplying.

○ Requeen colonies in the second half of August, right after completing Varroa treatment.

It's harder to find the old queen in strong colonies, but replacing her is worth the effort:

Young queens lay more eggs and greatly reduce the chance of swarming next spring.

A young queen also ensures a strong population of winter bees.

By Mid-August — End the Beekeeping Year and Begin Preparations for the Next One

By mid-August, the honey harvest should be finished and preparations for overwintering must begin.

This marks the end of one beekeeping year and the start of another.

If your hives already meet the criteria described in the autumn section — strong colonies, healthy brood, good stores — you can move forward confidently.

Following the annual beekeeping calendar ensures all necessary tasks are completed at the right time.

You now understand why each operation must be performed at a specific season and how it fits into the bees' natural cycle.

A Final Note

Bees will likely never evolve to resist Varroa mites entirely without our help, though selective breeding has improved hygienic behavior.

There's hope, however, that they might eventually learn to survive other threats such as CCD (Colony Collapse Disorder).

But this will take time.

Many colonies will still perish, and only with consistent management can surplus honey production and survival be achieved.

Beekeeping is a risk-filled occupation. Even when everything is done correctly, conditions can change overnight.

Yet by following the principles laid out in this guide, beekeepers can expect good honey yields and minimal winter losses.

Summary of Annual Guidelines

○ Fight Varroa and Nosema relentlessly using all available methods.

○ Plan winter survival in autumn — overwinter only strong colonies with young, productive queens.

○ Stimulate spring buildup with pollen substitutes and light syrup feeding.

○ Enter the main honey flow with strong colonies, ample space, and no fear of swarming.

○ Replace at least one box of old comb each year.

Miodrag Mića Petrović
Kragujevac, Serbia
choopko49@gmail.com

DEVELOPMENT OF A CARBOHYDRATE FEEDING PRODUCT FOR HONEY BEES (APIS MELLIFERA) WITH BENEFICIAL EFFECTS ON THEIR LIFESPAN

Background and problem description

Recent researches has shown that the longevity of honey bees (Apis mellifera) is more and more affected by specific pathogens but also by xenobiotic components existing in the environment. In order to counteract their negative effects as much as possible, the use of phytonutrients with strong antioxidant role in supplementary feeding is one of the solutions.

Purpose

To this end, we focused on testing a hydric extract of Siberian ginseng root (Eleutherococcus senticosus) administered on solid carbohydrate support of fondant and candy type (Candy board energetic®) equivalent of 0.1g root powder/100g product. Methodology: In this regard, a laboratory experiment was set up in Romania, carried out and repeated during the active season (May-July) of 2022 and 2023, for a duration of up to 28 days, on two groups (experimental and control), each consisting of 3 cages populated with 100-300 young non-flying bees collected from the same colony at time of cages population. The cages were checked out daily to record honeybee mortality. Two statistical tests were used to evaluate honeybees' longevity (SPSS: Kaplan-Meier; Cox regression).

Results and conclusion

The obtained results show that the honey bees in all experimental variants had significantly higher longevity ($p<0.001$) compared to the control group in which the bees were maintained only on carbohydrate feeding, free of added phytonutrients.

Practical implications for beekeepers

Supplementary feeding with Siberian ginseng root extract (Eleutherococcus senticosus) represents a promising option to improving supplemental feeding with substances that have beneficial effects on the lifespan of honeybees, having a positive impact both during the production period and during inactive periods of the year that involve resource conservation.

Authors: **Popovici Daniel Cristian, Pătrașcu Grațiela**

Research and Development Department, SC Cirast SRL (Dulcofruct Bee Nutrition Science), Goleştii de Sus, Coteşti, Vrancea County, Romania

TESTING

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENT BASED ON CARBOHYDRATE-PROTEIN SUBSTITUTES DURING THE REPLACEMENT PERIOD OF WINTERING HONEYBEES

Background and problem description

The period of replacement of wintering honey bee generations represents a critical period, when depopulation and mortality can occur. The quality and quantity of food reserves, when the consumption of energetic and protein substances from the honeycombs increases, is very important. To support the nutritional needs of the progressive increase in the number of larvae and to

avoid depletion of the adult population, the administration of protein patties at the end of winter becomes a necessity, therefore their quality must be known and scientifically validated for the safety of administrations.

Purpose

We tested the efficiency of a commercial energy-protein product (Super Protein Pattie®-SPP), with a content of 12.5% crude protein from inactivated yeast (Saccharomyces) and soybean (Glycine max) rich in essential amino acids, embedded in a mass of carbohydrate substances with added vitamins and minerals, probiotics, oils and phytonutrients from 14 medicinal plants. Methodology: Thus, a comparative experiment was set up, to test the effectiveness of carbohydrate-protein patties as supplementary feed on groups of standardized honeybee colonies consisting of 10 colonies/group. The experimental group was administered protein patties based on pollen substitutes (SPP) and one control group was administered protein patties based on 56% frozen pollen with 12,5% CP, collected in spring, containing pollen from the species: willow (Salix spp.), rapeseed (Brasica spp.), hawthorn (Crategus spp.) and fruit trees (Prunus spp., Pyrus spp., Malus spp.). The measurements targeted the amount of brood at the beginning and end of the testing period (15.02-21.03), using the Netz frame.

Results and conclusion

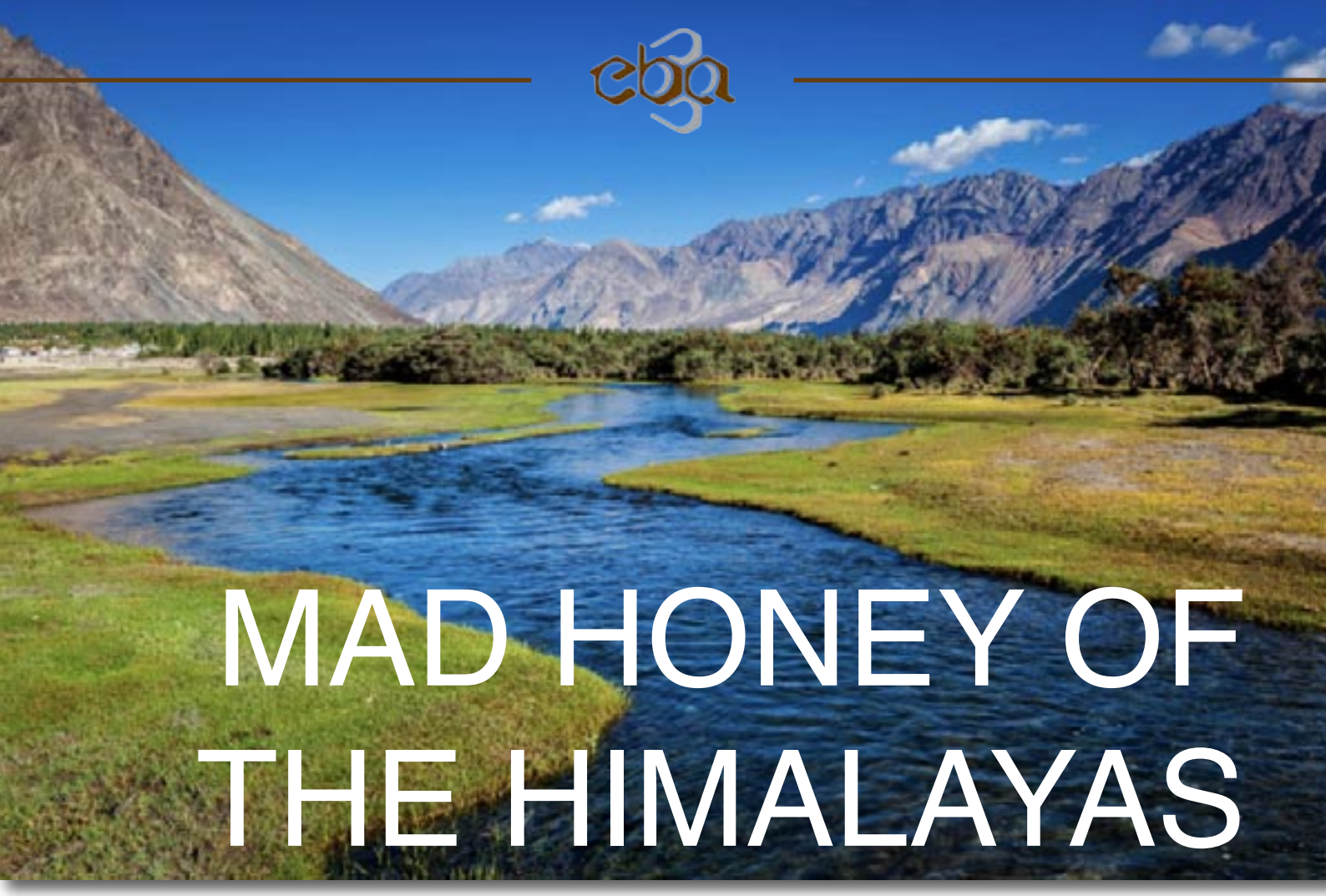
Statistical analysis of the obtained data (SPSS, T-student test for independent samples) shows that no significant differences were found between the two groups (t=-0.968, two tailed p=0.35), although in the control group it was found that the mean brood area was larger than in the experimental group (Mean exp.=22.45; Mean ctrl. =25.58) and significant difference compared to one unfed group (t=5.388, two tailed p=0.000; Mean=11,23).

Practical implications

Based on the datas, the administration of tested carbohydrate-protein substitutes patties during certain periods when their administration is allowed contributes to supporting brood rearing and the development of honeybee colonies.

Authors: **Popovici Daniel Cristian, Pătrașcu Grațiela**

Research and Development Department, SC Cirast SRL (Dulcofruct Bee Nutrition Science), Goleştii de Sus, Coteşti, Vrancea County, Romania



MAD HONEY OF THE HIMALAYAS

BRIDGING INDIGENOUS WISDOM AND MODERN SCIENCE

Introduction

Mad honey, also known as Himalayan cliff honey, is one of Nepal's most fascinating natural products, famed for its medicinal, psychoactive, and cultural significance. Derived from the nectar of rhododendron species and harvested by indigenous honey hunters, it represents both an ecological marvel and a vital livelihood for highland communities. This essay explores the bee species behind this unique honey, its biochemical properties, challenges in trade, and community-led efforts to build a sustainable and science-driven mad honey industry in Nepal.

The Bee Behind Mad Honey: Apis laboriosa

The Himalayan giant bee (Apis laboriosa), the world's largest honeybee, thrives at altitudes ranging from 3,000 to 4,900 meters above sea level, nearly as high as Mount Elbrus. These bees' nest on steep, south-facing cliffs, forming colonies of 6–12 per cliff with hives measuring up to 1.5 by 1 meter.

Each colony can produce between 50 and 132 kilograms of honey annually. Their foraging range extends up to 4.5 kilometers, and honey is harvested only twice a year, during spring (May–

June) and autumn (September–October) (Gregory & Jack, 2022).

Seasonal Migration and Nesting Behavior

The Apis laboriosa exhibits remarkable migratory behavior. During summer (May–October), colonies move upward to 3,500 m, while in winter (November–January), they descend to around 1,200 m, often clustering under rocks for warmth. By early spring, they return to mid-altitude nesting sites. Water proximity plays a crucial role, as colonies require 4–5 liters daily; any drying of water sources can force migration or colony loss (Thapa et al., 2018).

The Source of Mad Honey's Power: Rhododendron Spp.

Mad honey owes its unique properties to the nectar of specific Rhododendron species that contain grayanotoxins, neuroactive compounds responsible for its medicinal and intoxicating effects. In the Himalayas, rhododendrons flourish between 1,500 and 5,500 meters. Among the 1,073 known global species, 32 occur in Nepal, with R. arboreum, R. campanulatum, and R. flavum being the main nectar sources. The toxin levels vary seasonally, being higher in spring and moderate in autumn.

Bioactive Composition and Health Benefits of Mad Honey

1. Chemical Composition

Mad honey is rich in unique bioactive compounds and minerals that define its medicinal and physiological effects.

• Grayanotoxins (GTXs):

Contains 18 known types, primarily GTX-I to GTX-IV, with concentrations varying by season. Average levels are 25.07 μg/g (GTX-I) and 17.05 μg/g (GTX-III). These compounds are responsible for the honey's distinct pharmacological and psychoactive effects (Ahn et al., 2022).

• Volatile Compounds & Minerals:

Identified 72 volatile and mineral compounds, including high levels of Cu, Co, Cr, Ni, Se, Zn, Ca, and Mg, contributing to its therapeutic and nutritional value (Sahin et al., 2015).

• Antioxidant Activity:

Demonstrates strong antioxidant capacity (SC_{50}: 30 mg/mL) and total phenolic content of 9.11 mg/g, indicating its ability to neutralize free radicals and support cellular protection (Adhikari et al., 2025).

2. Traditional and Medicinal Uses

- Pain Relief: Used as a natural analgesic to ease arthritis, muscle pain, and chronic body aches.
- Aphrodisiac Effects: Traditionally regarded as a natural aphrodisiac, believed to enhance libido and sexual vitality.
- Digestive Health: Known to improve digestion, treat stomach ulcers, bloating, and constipation.
- Blood Pressure Regulation: Helps lower hypertension by promoting blood vessel relaxation.

• Immune Support: Due to its antibacterial and antifungal properties, it helps prevent infections, colds, and seasonal illnesses (Ullah et al., 2018).

3. Recommended Use and Safety

• Suggested Dose: 5–30 grams per day (approximately 1–2 teaspoons).
• Possible Side Effects (if overdosed): Dizziness, nausea, vomiting, hallucinations, or drop in blood pressure due to excessive grayanotoxin intake.

Bee-Friendly Practices for a Sustainable Future

1. Mindful Harvesting Policies

Communities follow mindful harvesting rules, leaving 1 in every 5 hives untouched and taking only 40–50% of the honeycomb from each colony. This ensures bees keep enough food for themselves while colonies stay strong and productive for the next season.

2. Adoption of Non-Destructive Honey Hunting Techniques

Sustainable techniques replace harmful traditions. Honey is collected in the evening (before sunset) when bees are calm. A warm sugar syrup (25–32°C) helps settle them, allowing safe harvest of up to 75% surplus honey. Instead of smoke, the gentle brushing method moves bees softly, keeping both bees and hives safe.

3. Water and Habitat Monitoring

Every colony needs 4–5 liters of water daily to stay healthy and active. Communities monitor ponds, streams, and forest waterholes to prevent drying and pollution. Protecting water and forest habitats helps bees thrive and reduces colony migration.

Building a Science-Based Sustainable Mad Honey System

Nepal is advancing toward the development of a science-based and sustainable Mad Honey (Apis laboriosa honey) system that integrates conservation, research, and responsible harvesting practices.

Through GIS mapping, Apis laboriosa colonies distributed between 1,000–4,500 meters are being identified to support colony conservation and site-specific management. Similarly, phenological mapping of Rhododendron species is being used to determine grayanotoxin peak

periods, helping establish optimal and safe harvesting times.

Laboratory analyses such as High-Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC) and Liquid Chromatography–Tandem Mass Spectrometry (LC–MS/MS) are applied to quantify grayanotoxins I and III with precision. DNA and pollen profiling confirm the floral origin of the honey, while moisture content analysis ensures compliance with Codex Alimentarius standards (≤20%), despite the naturally higher level of approximately 25.7% found in A. laboriosa honey (Adhikari et al., 2025).

A QR-linked Certificate of Analysis (COA) system is being developed to ensure traceability and scientific transparency. Nepal is also working to align its production and quality control with USDA Organic, EU Organic, and Fair-Trade certification frameworks, strengthening its position in global research-based honey standards.

Furthermore, the proposed Mad Honey Global Alliance, involving Nepal, Turkey, Bhutan, and Georgia, seeks to harmonize laboratory protocols, grayanotoxin thresholds, and eco-certification systems. Through this research-driven approach, Nepal is establishing a foundation for a traceable, scientifically validated, and sustainable high-mountain honey system, strengthening both its ecological resilience and global scientific identity.

Reference

Adhikari, A., Thapa, N. K., Gurung, A., & Parajuli, N. (2025). Physicochemical, antioxidant, and antimicrobial study in Nepalese honey. BIBECHANA, 22(1), 52–62.

Ahn, S. Y., Kim, S., & Cho, H. (2022). Determination of Grayanotoxin I and Grayanotoxin III in mad honey from Nepal using liquid chromatography-tandem mass spectrometry. 분석과학, 35(2), 82–91.

Gregory, M., & Jack, C. (2022). Himalayan Giant Honey Bee, Cliff Honey Bee (suggested common names) Apis laboriosa Smith (Insecta: Hymenoptera: Apidae): EENY-777/IN1348, 8/2021. EDIS, 2022(1).

Sahin, H., Turumtay, E. A., Yildiz, O., & Kolayli, S. (2015). Grayanotoxin-III detection and antioxidant activity of mad honey. International Journal of Food Properties, 18(12), 2665–2674.

Thapa, R., Aryal, S., & Jung, C. (2018). Beekeeping and honey hunting in Nepal: Current status and future perspectives. Asian Beekeeping in the 21st Century, 111–127.

Ullah, S., Khan, S. U., Saleh, T. A., & Fahad, S. (2018). Mad honey: uses, intoxicating/poisoning effects, diagnosis, and treatment. RSC Advances, 8(33), 18635–18646.

Dhurba Saud

Research and Outreach officer
Himaida Nepal Pvt.ltd
Nepal
dhurba6514@gmail.com
LinkedIn:
https://www.linkedin.com/in/dhurbasaud/

MY WORK WITH YOUNG BEEKEEPERS

Soon it will be the tenth year of my beekeeping journey and the twentieth year of my work as a teacher at the Biotechnical School Maribor. I first got to know bees during my studies at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, and I started working with children already in high school—as an animator, educator, and group leader in various camps and colonies.

It was somehow logical that I would connect the world of bees with the world of children—those very young, the slightly older ones, and also those who always remain young at heart.

Slovenia is one of the countries in the European Union with the most developed system of organizing beekeeping clubs. They are active across all Slovenian regions. Currently, as many as 2164 children are involved in these clubs, which is quite a number for a nation of just two million people. Nevertheless, we are sometimes surprised by the high average age of Slovenia's

11000 beekeepers. Small children eagerly join the clubs and take part in various activities and competitions, but in secondary school their enthusiasm often fades, and later only a few choose beekeeping as a professional path.

The greatest challenge in teaching young people has therefore become how to maintain their enthusiasm for beekeeping. It is said that examples inspire, and that children like to imitate you. But this is true mostly for younger children—when they reach their teenage years, these little rebels want to become independent and go their own way. Unfortunately, nowadays they often look for the easiest path. So how can we present beekeeping—a profession that requires a lot of effort and hard work—as a goal and a lifelong calling?

In fact, we should start at the very beginning—with the youngest children, who have no fear and are eager to learn new things. During my teacher training, I encountered Montessori pedagogy. Since our school building also hosts a Montessori kindergarten—the Children's House—I saw how much valuable experience and knowledge children gain through sensory-based learning. The child can choose independently and learn autonomy.

Maria Montessori was the first to discover and prove that children have an "absorbent mind" and sensitive periods (for language, for order, etc.) which disappear after the age of six—making the preschool period so important. She observed how capable small children are of deep concentration, how persistently they repeat an activity out of their own motivation, and how they naturally develop a love for order and silence. She noticed how much it means to them when they can choose materials for work that attract them.

Following the principles of this pedagogy—and also my own intuition—I always offer younger children various activities and even allow them direct contact with bees. This is always received very positively. I usually let a bee crawl on my hand, and when the children see that it is a peaceful creature, they all come closer. Stings are very rare. When I open hives, I ensure proper protection—this makes the children feel safer, and dressing up in beekeeping suits and gloves is fun too. Direct contact with bees always leaves the strongest impression.

A completely different story begins when these curious little children turn into moody teenagers. They are not only moody—sometimes they are lost, searching for their identity. They can't wait to leave the safe harbor of their hometown and go out into the world, hoping to find what they're looking for. Their initial enthusiasm often fades quickly; few persist, most seek new challenges. Some succeed, others give up, and some become apathetic and uninterested. Many of them attended beekeeping clubs in primary school; some competed, and a small handful come from beekeeping families. The topics that once fascinated them are no longer interesting.

Since students of vocational schools are usually commuters, it is difficult to organize extracurricular activities in the afternoon. That leaves very little time and requires a lot of creativity to keep them engaged and inspired. Those we do manage to attract will most likely stay and continue our tradition.

My work and, in a way, my mission is therefore to educate young beekeepers and encourage them to persevere on their path. If they wish to succeed, they must first fall in love with bees, then learn how to work with them and try different beekeeping techniques. After that, all they need is one good beekeeping season, and they are one of us. Every award for their products and every recognition is a step toward their success. With a little encouragement from their mentors and teachers, their motivation grows even stronger.

Of course, there are obstacles along the way—without them, progress would not be possible. We must treat them as challenges. One obstacle can be colleagues and school management who simply do not understand our enthusiasm. Another can be classmates who sometimes mock and even discourage someone. Work is never as attractive as fun.

It is also difficult to include young people in association activities, as their interests differ from those of older members. The only beekeeping societies that are rejuvenating are those with young presidents or board members. We must offer young people various roles in organizations, support them, and not criticize them if something goes wrong. That's how they'll feel important and accepted.

At present, I include young people in various European projects. At first, there was little interest—but now, more and more are joining. Within these projects, we don't only learn about beekeeping, but also everything connected to it—culture, art, and social life. Bees and love for nature connect people and bring together those who share values.

Through Erasmus+ projects, we discovered a new dimension of beekeeping. We befriended like-minded beekeepers and teachers from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Greece, Turkey, and Germany. We explored different beekeeping methods, depictions of beekeepers, bees, and nature in art, and even beekeeping songs. Since bees communicate the location of nectar through dance, we also danced to the rhythms of traditional folk songs. The main focus of our Erasmus activities was the promotion of beekeeping and bee products. We presented them at fairs, markets, during lessons in different subjects, and as

part of extracurricular activities. We organized various workshops for children, allowing them to interact with bees and taste their products. Through sensory experiences, our lavender became imprinted in their memory and hearts. They love to return and enjoy bee products. Even if they don't become beekeepers, they will know how to buy and appreciate bee products. They will also better understand, protect, and preserve nature. Planting and caring for honey plants also plays an important role. In Slovenia, many sponsors donate seeds, seedlings, soil, and—through creative workshops—encourage children to plant.

This year, we are involved in two projects: the first titled "Listen to the Bees and Let Them Guide Us," and the second with a futuristic title, "Tastes Frozen in Time: A Food Revolution Changing the Rules of the Game." We managed to connect both projects into a single exchange, where we met with students from the Vocational Lyceum of Heraklion in Crete, the Agricultural and Veterinary Secondary School in Lanškroun (Czech Republic), and the Secondary Vocational School in Banská Bystrica (Slovakia).

The one-week exchange was very intensive—we organized workshops on freeze-drying, bee product processing, and art. We created a herbarium of honey plants and learned about their importance for bees, humans, and our environment. We learned how to extract essential oils from honey plants through distillation, how to make macerates and tinctures, and why we use them. We made our own ointment and soft propolis. We also freeze-dried honey plants and de-

signed a planting plan for a honey garden. We cooked a Slovenian dish—Pohorje pot—freeze-dried it, and later reheated it by adding water. Such prepared meals are perfect for travel—they don't spoil and are quick to prepare when hunger strikes. We spent a lot of time together, explored the beauty and uniqueness of the area, and learned about different beekeeping styles, hive systems, apitherapy, and apitourism.

All these activities connected us—we became friends. We gave the children something precious: a love for bees and everything they give and receive.

"Let us learn from the bees: diligence enriches, courage strengthens, and unity makes us strong."

Kristina Dolinar Paulic
kristina.dolinar.paulic@gmail.com

THE FIRST CONGRESS IN HISTORY TO DEDICATE PART OF ITS PROGRAM TO YOUNG BEEKEEPERS

The Apimondia Congress was held in Copenhagen from 23 to 27 September 2025 and it was attended by the majority of the members of the EBA Youth Commission - Meral Kekeçoğlu, Kristina Dolinar Paulič, Slobodan Dolasevic and Jiří Píza. – With their participation in the congress, the members of the commission tried to support the activities of young beekeepers from all over the world. Therefore, they had a large number of meetings with representatives of individual countries and their beekeeping associations. They also promoted not only their activities, but also the upcoming IMYB - International Meeting of Young Beekeepers in 2026, which will be organized by Ulster Beekeepers Association and will be held in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

The Apimondia Congress in Copenhagen was the first congress in history to dedicate part of its program to young beekeepers. Representatives of Apimondia, the Beekeeping Foundation from the United Arab Emirates and the ICYB – International Centre for Young Beekeepers prepared a two-hour workshop for young beekeepers at the Apimondia congress, which they then jointly moderated. The workshop focused on working with young beekeepers and featured a lecture by Jiří Píza on the topic of the International Meeting of Young Beekeepers - IMYB.

Also young beekeepers performed at this workshop. Apart from one of the six, who performed, the rest were participants and competitors at the International Meeting of Young Beekeepers - IMYB. These young beekeepers were the youngest performers at the Apimondia congress in its history. Lukáš Loukota lectured on the topic of "Czech beekeeping clubs". Marek Matulík introduced us to the topic of "Mobile applications for young beekeepers". Jan Kopáček spoke about "Attracting young beekeepers and promoting beekeeping to the public". Adam Šimoník focused on the topic of "Shared apiaries for youth". Dhurba Saud from Nepal gave a presentation on the topic of "Empowering Indigenous Youth Through Sustainable Mad Honey Enterprises – A Model from Nepal´s Himalayan Highlands" and Qiu Peicheng's presentation was about "Beekeeping Education and Sustainable Development for beekeeping in China". They delivered their speech in English in a completely professional manner and were at the level of experienced adult lecturers. We really do not have to worry about the future of beekeeping, because our young beekeepers are very good and we are rightly proud of them.

This year´s Apimondia congress has ended, but we are already working intensively with the organizers of the next Apimondia congress, which will be held in Dubai in 2027, where we would like to reserve even more time and space for young beekeepers than this year in Copenhagen.

Jiří Píza

BEES LIFE

A new book

BEE DEMOCRACY AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY

The handbook Bee Democracy and Constitutional Democracy, with corresponding flashcards (author of both Nina Ilič) was published as part of the Erasmus+ project for the prevention of peer violence, which encourages primary and secondary school pupils to become active citizens through critical evaluation of solutions from the world of bees:

EDUHIVE - DEVELOPING CIVIC AWARENESS AND VALUES THROUGH APIPEDAGOGY (Lead partner of the project: Grammar School Celje – Centre, Slovenia; Apipedagogika® holder and project partner: Institute for the Development of Empathy and Creativity Eneja, Slovenia; partner: Istituto Istruzione Superiore Leonardo da Vinci Ripamonti, Italy).

In modern education, we are increasingly confronted with a decline in various forms of literacy, including reading, environmental, digital, and emotional literacy, as well as ecological and ethical literacy. In the Apipedagogy for classroom lessons programme, pupils use Bee Lessons flashcards, which represent 10 values that humans share with bees, to build bridges between civic awareness, European identity, empathy, and sustainable development.

Apipedagogika® is a Slovenian innovation at the intersection of pedagogy, apitherapy, and sustainable education, effectively responding to the aforementioned challenges with an interdisciplinary approach. A key feature of Apipedagogy (Apipedagogika®) is its pedagogical-apitherapeutic approach, i.e. an approach in which bee products and the sociology of bees are incorporated into the pedagogical process to achieve apitherapeutical and curricular goals in the form of structured or unstructured didactic elements, with simultaneous goals of strengthening resilience, realising children's rights to a healthy environment, supporting developmental difficulties, and child development itself.

The Apipedagogy methodology for classroom lessons, which, in addition to classroom lessons, also fits perfectly into the curriculum, e.g., civics and ethics, Slovenian language, biology, elective subject beekeeping, natural sciences, pedagogy, didactics, etc. In addition to educational elements, it also constantly pursues the dimension of duty, which touches on the moral duties of teachers. Therefore, this handbook, on approximately 60 pages, is useful and enriches the content for both students and teachers.

The Bee Lessons flashcards introduce interactive apipedagogical stories that intertwine intangible cultural heritage with modern lifestyles, based on realistic or imaginary starting points, in

the form of a pedagogical approach to problem-solving. In this way, Api pedagogy encourages student involvement, develops creativity, and strengthens critical thinking and collaborative problem-solving skills, while also offering support during the developmental phase of identity crisis.

In apipedagogical activities that develop empathy through practical teaching methods, students develop motivation for learning and cooperation. The clear connection between the content and specific life situations and challenges that they themselves face encourages self-initiative for critical reflection on themselves and events in their environment.

With the help of the Bee Lesson teaching cards (©Nina Ilič), the differences and similarities between bee democracy and constitutional democracy, and the apipedagogical activities that stem from them, pupils take on a participatory role. Based on their own experiences and the incorporation of traditional practical knowledge and roles with which they can easily identify, they perceive themselves and the world around them as an inseparable, intertwined, and interdependent whole. With bees as their inspiration, pupils develop the following through interactive, creative bee lessons:

- empathy, altruism, mutual respect,
- understanding of sustainable development,
- European identity,
- awareness of the importance of bees and a healthy environment,
- understanding the fundamental constitutional values and democracy,
- understanding European and national citizenship,
- skills for preventing peer violence and a society based on solidarity.

The manual will be available in three languages: Slovenian, Italian, and English. Pre-orders in English or Italian can be made at zavod.eneja@gmail.com.

Nina Ilič
Apitherapist and Professional Head of Apipedagogical Programs

Institute for the Development of Empathy and Creativity Eneja

A new book

AUSTIN MACAULEY PUBLISHERS™

LONDON • CAMBRIDGE • NEW YORK • SHARJAH

Book Title: Bees and Beekeeping in the United Arab Emirates

By Abu Dhabi Agriculture and Food Safety Authority

Author Name: Dr. Denis Anderson, Dr. Ihsan Abu Alrub

ISBN: 9789948768500

Genre: Non-Fiction, Technology & Engineering / Agriculture /

Book Release Date: 29-11-2024

About the book:

Bees and Beekeeping in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) marks the first publication in the UAE of a book focusing on bees, honeybees, and beekeeping. Wild and managed bees are known as "keystone species" because of their significance as pollinators of flowering plants in nature and agriculture, but despite this, little is known about bees in the UAE. This book is designed to captivate a broad audience, blending general knowledge about the diversity, significance, and conservation of bees with specific insights into challenges unique to honeybees (Apis mellifera) in the UAE. Key topics include sustainable beekeeping practices, managing hives in hot, arid environments, and identifying and addressing major pests and diseases. Special attention is given to the wild dwarf honeybee (Apis florea), a prevalent species in the UAE. While not a basic guide to beekeeping, this book offers valuable information for both novice and experienced beekeepers.

About the authors:

1. **Dr. Denis Anderson**

Dr Anderson is an international bee scientist, best known for discovering and naming the Varroa Mite (Varroa destructor), the most serious pest of honeybees globally. With a PhD from the Australian National University, Dr Anderson has spent the past nine years working to improve the beekeeping sector of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), under the auspice of the Abu Dhabi Agriculture & Food Safety Authority. During his tenure, Dr Anderson has put UAE beekeeping on a more scientific and sustainable footing, and overseen the development of the 'Emirati Bee', a line of honeybee that is well adapted to the harsh conditions of the UAE.

Dr Abu Alrub is an experienced agricultural researcher, who has led numerous research initiatives at the Abu Dhabi Agriculture and Food Safety Authority in the UAE. Prior to her work in Abu Dhabi, she served as the Director of Field Crops at the Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture. With a PhD in Crop Science from the University of Copenhagen, Dr Abu Alrub's research and academic journey underscore her profound interest in genetic diversities inherent in landrace plants. Broadening her scholarly pursuits into the apiculture domain and the world of honey bees, Dr Abu Alrub has notably played a monumental role in advancing honey bee breeding programs and enhancing the sustainability practices of beekeeping in the UAE.

2. Dr. Ihsan Abu Alrub

Dr Abu Alrub is an experienced agricultural researcher, who has led numerous research initiatives at the Abu Dhabi Agriculture and Food Safety Authority in the UAE. Prior to her work in Abu Dhabi, she served as the Director of Field Crops at the Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture. With a PhD in Crop Science from the University of Copenhagen, Dr Abu Alrub's research and academic journey underscore her profound interest in genetic diversities inherent in landrace plants. Broadening her scholarly pursuits into the apiculture domain and the world of honey bees, Dr Abu Alrub has notably played a monumental role in advancing honey bee breeding programs and enhancing the sustainability practices of beekeeping in the UAE.

DIGITAL TRACEABILITY OF SLOVENIAN HONEY: THE QR CODE OF AUTHENTICITY

In cooperation between the Beekeepers' Association of Slovenia (ČZS) and GS1 Slovenia, the first digital traceability system for honey has been developed and implemented.

The system is based on global GS1 standards and uses 2D codes with GS1 Digital Link.

This project lays the foundation for complete traceability and authenticity of certified Slovenian honey, allowing consumers to verify the product's origin by simply scanning a code with their smartphone.

Each jar of certified "Slovenski med" (Slovenian Honey) is equipped with a special QR code printed on the certification label.

This QR code contains a unique digital link: https://www.czs.si/253/383003408000912345

In this structure:

- 253 represents the GS1 Application Identifier for GDTI,
- 3830034080009 identifies the "Slovenski med" certificate,
- 12345 is the serial number of the individual jar.

This digital identification connects each individual product with its certificate of origin and enables consumers to easily verify the honey's authenticity and provenance by scanning the QR code.

The system supports multiple beekeepers – each can have their own subdomain, for example:

https://q.okusi-med.eu/253/38300890500020034302, which is linked to the main domain of the Beekeepers' Association of Slovenia through the GS1 Digital Link.

The new solution marks a milestone for Slovenian beekeeping and the wider European market, addressing one of the biggest challenges in modern honey production – fraud and adulteration.

According to data from the European Commission, almost half of the honey samples tested during the "From the Hives" initiative (2021–2022) showed signs of adulteration, such as the addition of sugar syrups, removal of pollen, or false labeling of origin.

These issues are not limited to imported honey but also threaten local producers, who struggle to compete with cheaper, falsely labeled products.

Such fraud undermines the economy, erodes consumer trust, and damages the reputation of the beekeeping sector.

With this project, Slovenia becomes one of the first countries in Europe to introduce a digital system for honey authenticity and traceability.

Using the GS1 GDTI standard, each certificate of origin receives a unique identifier, while GS1 Digital Link connects the physical product to a digital record accessible via the QR code.

Consumers can thus check at any time and from anywhere:

who produced the honey, where it was filled, and whether it carries a valid certificate.

This digital connection significantly reduces the possibility of fraud, as each jar carries a unique serial number recorded in a globally standardized GS1 structure.

The joint project by the Beekeepers' Association of Slovenia and GS1 Slovenia stands as an exemplary model of how tradition and modern technology can work hand in hand.

Slovenian beekeepers gain a reliable tool to protect the integrity and quality of their work, while consumers gain a trustworthy way to confirm the true meaning behind the "Slovenski med" label.

In this way, digital traceability becomes a symbol of transparency, trust, and authenticity — values that Slovenian beekeeping has upheld for centuries and now proudly carries into the digital age through global GS1 standards.

IMAGE: GS1 Digital Link connects the physical product with a digital record accessible via a QR code, allowing the consumer to verify who produced the honey, where it was filled, and whether it carries a valid certificate

BEEKEEPING IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF RURAL LIFE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Beekeeping is an important part of rural life in Northern Ireland.

Our pollinators are vital to our farmers and gardeners, protecting and sustaining the natural balance needed for our agri-food production.

Our bees and other pollinators play a central role in our local economy and are responsible for pollinating, the foundations of so much of what we eat and for maintaining the health of our countryside.

Without them, the impact on our environment, our agriculture and our economy would be severe.

That's why, since being elected Member of Parliament for South Antrim last year, I've continued to raise the need for stronger protections for bees and those who care for them. I have called repeatedly for the appointment of a dedicated Bee Inspector in Northern Ireland, a position which previously provided essential on-the-ground expertise and guidance for our beekeepers, as well as early warning when disease or invasive species appeared. The recent confirmed sighting of an Asian hornet In Northern Ireland has made it clear that this role can no longer remain vacant.

I have also urged closer cooperation between the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in Westminster, alongside the Animal and Plant Health Agency, who have provided valuable support and guidance in recent weeks. This cooperation is vital to continued biosecurity - protecting bees can't stop at the Irish Sea, it must be a shared effort across the United Kingdom.

Our beekeepers continue to demonstrate huge commitment to their craft and a deep understanding of the important role pollinators play. As they support and protect the pollinators that sustain our farms and countryside, they deserve support and protection, as well as clear action, from the government.

It's important that we remember that safeguarding bees isn't just about the honey they produce, it's about protecting our food system and the health of our wider natural environment.

*

Robin Swann MP

Member of Parliament
for South Antrim
Ulster Unionist Party

FREE EBA WEBINAR ANNOUNCEMENT FROM HIVE TO HEALTH: THE ROLE OF BEE PRODUCTS IN PREVENTING AND HEALING RESPIRATORY VIRAL INFECTIONS

Exploring scientific evidence and natural strategies for better immunity and lung health

Date: 23 November 2025

Time: 10:00 (CET)

Organized by: European Beekeeping Association (EBA)

Language: EnglishThe European Beekeeping Association (EBA) is pleased to announce an upcoming webinar focused on the vital link between bee products and respiratory health. The event will highlight scientific evidence and natural approaches that support the immune system and promote recovery from respiratory viral infections.

Speaker:Dr. Zorica Plavšić, MD, PhD, MPH Apitherapist, Member of the EBA Scientific Committee on Apitherapy (Serbia), President and Founder of the First International Medical Society for Apitherapy Serbia – ApiMed. Dr. Plavšić will present the latest research and clinical applications of bee products—such as honey, propolis, royal jelly, and beepollen—in strengthening immunity and improving lung health.This webinar is part of EBA's continuing effort to promote scientific knowledge and raise awareness about the benefits of apitherapy and the essential role of bees in human health and well being.

Participation is free of charge.

The access link for the webinar will be published soon on EBA's official social media channels. Join us and discover how the healing power of the hive contributes to better health for all!

19-20.02.2026
Kraków

Mead Madness Cup & Honey Madness Cup:

Największy na świecie konkurs miodów pitnych

19-20.02.2026
Kraków

Międzynarodowy Konkurs Miodowy

zarejestruj miody juz dziś!!!

VII Europejskiej Konferencji Miodosytników

- **Największe na świecie wydarzenie związane z miodem pitnym**
- **Dla początkujących i profesjonalistów**
- **Wielka degustacja miodów pitnych**
- **Wykłady i wydarzenia towarzyskie**

meadmadnesscup.com honeymadnesscup.com emmconference.com

Registration Opens for the International Celebration of the Golden Drink: Mead Madness Cup 2026, Honey Madness Cup 2026, and the European Mead Makers Conference Kraków, February 19-21, 2026

We are thrilled to announce the opening of registration for the prestigious events that annually attract the leaders of the global meadmaking and beekeeping industries! We invite creators, enthusiasts, and professionals who wish to submit their products for international assessment, expand their knowledge, and establish valuable industry contacts.

The European Mead Makers Conference (EMM Conference), accompanied by the two largest international competitions—the Mead Madness Cup (MMC) for meads and the Honey Madness Cup (HMC) for honey—will take place at the Galaxy Hotel in Kraków from February 19-21, 2026.

The Conference and the Mead Madness Cup competition have been organized since 2018 and are firmly established in the calendar of the most important events in the mead world. They cater to both home meadmakers (Home) and commercial producers (Pro).

These respected events are organized by Mateusz "maTEJ" Błaszczyk, Krzysztof Jarek (Kings of Mead), and Tomasz Józefowicz (pitnemiody.pl)—experts and enthusiasts who have built a platform for global knowledge and experience exchange over the years.

Mead Madness Cup – Arena of Mead Champions

The Mead Madness Cup is a competition that annually gathers hundreds of the best mead producers and judges from around the world. In 2025, this largest mead competition worldwide received over 850 mead entries from more than 40 countries, including distant corners of the globe such as Australia, New Zealand, the USA, Singapore, South Korea, Mexico, New Caledonia, Peru, and Japan.

The competition, the results of which carry enormous prestige, will take place on February 19-20, 2026. Commercial and home meads compete in separate, detailed categories, evaluated by an international panel of experts according to the rigorous standards of the MJP (Mead Judging Programme).

Grand Champion HOME and Grand Champion PRO Titles

The winners of individual categories in the HOME and PRO competitions will enter an additional, final round. In this round, the two best meads of the competition will be selected, receiving the prestigious titles and trophies of Grand Champion HOME and Grand Champion PRO. Furthermore, in the home competition, the title of Polish Home Meadmaker Champion is awarded to the participant whose meads win the most medals.

Honey Madness Cup – Verification of Honey Quality

Following a very successful pilot competition in 2024, the Honey Madness Cup continues, providing a platform for apiary owners and honey producers. The competition emphasizes the organoleptic quality and varietal purity of the products. The evaluation is conducted by a team of experts specializing in honey assessment.

Entries can be submitted until December 19, 2025, or until the maximum limit of 200 entries is reached, which guarantees the possibility of a de-

Event	Competition / Conference Dates	Important Registration Deadlines
Mead Madness Cup (MMC)	February 19-20, 2026	Mead Registration until **January 23, 2026**
Honey Madness Cup (HMC)	February 21, 2026	Honey Registration until **December 19, 2025** (or until 200 entries)
EMM Conference	February 21, 2026	Participant Registration until **February 1, 2026**

tailed and reliable evaluation of every sample. This is an excellent opportunity to test your honey against international standards and earn prestigious medals that validate the product's quality in the eyes of consumers.

Honeys at the Honey Madness Cup are judged based on organoleptic qualities and do not compete against each other. To earn a medal, the honey must achieve the desired scoring level. On a 100-point scale, the minimum required for a bronze medal is 65 points. Silver will be awarded to any honey scoring between 80.5 and 95 points. Gold medals are reserved for the best honeys, which score above 95.5 points.

The HMC judges are honey sommeliers affiliated with the international organization Alba del Miel, and the Head Judge is Rasa Nabažaitė, one of the most experienced honey sommeliers in this part of Europe.

European Mead Makers Conference (EMM Conference)

The competitions are part of a larger, three-day event. The European Mead Makers Conference (EMM Conference), culminating on February 21, 2026, is the central gathering point for the entire industry. For several years, this event has brought together over 400 mead enthusiasts and producers from around the globe.

It features a series of inspiring lectures led by world leaders in fermentation technology, beekeeping, and marketing, as well as numerous informal meetings and tastings of rare and extraordinary meads from the farthest corners of the world. All lectures are conducted in Polish or with simultaneous translation. The full list of lectures and discussion panels is available on the website: emmconference.com.

The entire event will culminate in a ceremonial awards presentation (February 21, 2026), combined with a gala dinner and an extensive mead tasting.

Join Us!

We invite all producers, enthusiasts, and individuals connected with the meadmaking industry to participate in these exceptional events.

- Mead Madness Cup: meadmadnesscup.com
- Honey Madness Cup: honeymadnesscup.com
- EMM Conference: emmconference.com

TO THE EBA WITHOUT MEMBERSHIP FEE

At the meeting of the EBA Executive Board, on the proposal of the EBA President Mr. Boštjan Noč, an important decision was made regarding membership in the EBA in the upcoming period: "**Membership in the EBA is free for the duration of the mandate of the EBA President Mr. Boštjan Noč**."

Decision of the EBA Executive Board is another confirmation that the EBA continues to work only in the interest of bees, bee-keepers and consumers in Europe.

SPONSORSHIP REQUEST

AND METHOD OF ADVERTISING IN THE MAGAZINE

On behalf of the European Beekeeping Association (EBA),I am writing to seek your support in the form of sponsorship to help ensure the smooth and effective operation of our Association.

The EBA is dedicated to promoting and supporting beekeeping across Europe. The Association was founded out of necessity, as bees and beekeepers are essential for our ecosystem and society. Without beekeepers there are no bees, and whithout bees there is no pollination, leading to a lack of food on planet Earth.

EBA works for bees, beekeepers and consumers.

Our mission is to:

1. Fight against counterfeit honey that flooded the European market;
2. Introduction of incentives per beehive as agro-ecological programme;
3. Fight against the improper use of chemicals that are harmful to bees;

In return for your generous support, we offer various sponsorship benefits. We believe that this partnership would be mutually beneficial and would significantly contribute to the advancement of the european beekeeping sector.

ADVERTISING IN THE MAGAZINE:

1. Through sponsorship packages;
2. It is possible to pay for an ad only for 1/4 page (100 euros), for a larger area by agreement. The entire page cannot be obtained, it belongs only to the General Sponsor.

IT CONTINUES

EBA
sponsorship packages

GOLD sponsor - 5.000 euros:
Advertisement on the EBA website
Presentation at all EBA events, logo on all EBA correspondence
12 advertisements in the EBA monthly e-magazine in A4 page size

SILVER sponsor - 3.000 euros:
Advertisement on the EBA website
Presentation at all EBA events, logo on all EBA correspondence
12 advertisements in the EBA monthly e-magazine in half A4 page size

BRONZE sponsor - 2.000 euros:
Advertisement on the EBA website
12 advertisements in the EBA monthly e-magazine in the size of 1/4 A4 page

EBA SUPPORTER - 1.000 euros:
Advertisement on the EBA website
12 advertisements in the EBA monthly e-magazine in the size of 1/8 A4 page

These are basic packages, but we are open to different forms of cooperation, which we agree on individually. We would be delighted to discuss this opportunity further and explore how we can align our goals with your organization's values.

Thank you for considering our request. We look forward to the possibility of working together.

Yours sincerely,

Boštjan Noč
President of the European Beekeeping Association

EBA informative and professional monthly magazine "NO BEES, NO LIFE"

November 2025.
Issued since July 2024.
Publisher: **European Beekeeping Association** (EBA)
Head office: Brdo pri Lukovici 8, 1225 Lukovica, Slovenija
eba@ebaeurope.eu
www.ebaeurope.eu

Editor in chief of the electronic edition of the magazine:
MD Rodoljub Živadinović, Epidemiology Specialist, Apitherapist
apikult@gmail.com, +381 60 444 01 01 (Viber, WhatsApp, Telegram, Signal, WeChat, Daze)