

## Prospects of beekeeping in Rajasthan

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The present study estimates the profitability of beekeeping enterprise in the Rajasthan. For this purpose fifteen non-professional and professional beekeepers were selected from three districts of Rajasthan. It was found that the average cost of production of five beehives of non-professional and 50 beehives of professional beekeepers for first and second years is Rs. 5,054, 1,736 and 87,090, 89,800 with gross income of Rs. 9,000, 20,000 and 1,80,000, 4,70,000, respectively. The net income came to Rs. 3,936, 18,264 and 92,910, 3,80,200, respectively. Eventually, recommendations were made to overcome the problems that the beekeeping industry is facing in Rajasthan.

The abundance of bee forage plants throughout the year determines the growth of bee colony and hence the productivity of beekeeping. Many forest based and cultivated plants can provide nectar and pollen for foraging bees. India is endowed with more than 700 plant species which are known to be visited by honeybees. This available bee flora can support 14,32,350 honey bee colonies, producing approximately 50,000 tones of honey per annum. Despite fairly abundant floral sources and quite suitable climate for beekeeping in India, honey production was estimated more than 50,000 tons in 2010. This reveals that present level of honey production is much below to its expectable potential. Adoption of beekeeping is influenced by its profitability associated with this enterprise. Unfortunately, little information is available about this aspect particularly in Rajasthan. Therefore, the study was conducted to work out the economics and to identify the constraints of beekeepers, this enterprise is facing, and their possible solutions.

To work out the economics of this enterprise in Rajasthan, data was collected from fifteen respondents involved in this enterprise. Beekeepers having five colonies were considered as non-professional beekeepers and beekeepers having 50 bee colonies were

considered as professional beekeepers. The respondents from 3 districts viz., Bharatpur, Dausa and Jaipur were interviewed during National seminar on awareness-cum-technology transfer in beekeeping organized by National Bee Board, New Delhi in January 2006 at Bharatpur, Rajasthan with the help of questionnaire.

The results (Table 1) shows that the average cost of production of five colonies of non-professional beekeepers for first and second year were Rs. 5,054 and 1,736 with net income of Rs. 3,936 and 18,264, respectively. Similarly average cost of 50 hives for first and second year were Rs. 87,090 and Rs. 89,800, with net income of Rs. 92,910 and Rs. 3,80,200, respectively while the honey production ranged from 5-17 kg and 12-37 kg with an average of 15 and 30 kg in case of non-professional and professional beekeepers, respectively. The higher honey production by professional beekeepers than non-professional beekeepers was due to timely migration of honeybee colonies to different floral spots as none of the location and season in the Rajasthan, support the blooming of bee flora throughout the year. Major portion of the honey is produced from *Brassica*, citrus, berseem, seasonal vegetables and forest plants. However, the period from June to August where no bee flora is available, supplemental feeding in the form of sugar (1:1) and pollen substitutes (corn flour, gram flour, etc.) is served to the bees to meet their honey to European countries and Middle East and earning foreign exchange, beside making their products like packed honey, wax, pollen, propolis, etc. in the local market. Beekeepers can not only uplift their social status from the marketing of their products but also increase their crop yield with the pollination benefits by honeybees.

### *Problems in beekeeping :*

Beekeepers are facing a number of problems in Rajasthan, which are as under:

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