

NECTAR NEWS

NECTAR NIEUWS



NETHERLANDS EXPERTISE
CENTRE FOR TROPICAL
APICULTURE RESOURCES

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NECTAR is a non-governmental non-profit association of tropical beekeeping experts in the Netherlands and abroad. It was founded in 1990. NECTAR stimulates, promotes, and advises on (sub)tropical beekeeping activities to interested parties in development assistance programmes throughout the world.

EDITORIAL

Worldwide many initiatives are taken to develop beekeeping in areas where this most environment-friendly activity offers potential to help raise the subsistence level of rural people. We are aware of the fact that inputs and investments for small scale beekeeping are low. This activity entails little competition with other agricultural enterprise as long as natural resources (suitable trees and plants) are available nearby. Further, we all know that the major product of the small scale beekeeper, honey, is a highly valued product everywhere. Often the local market is unsatisfied.

Despite this it is remarkable that in several regions where beekeeping on the basis of environmental resources showed great promise and where already training programmes were carried out, the expected breakthrough did not take place. Questions concerning the background of this are at present discussed within international organisations like Apimondia and FAO. Several causes are being identified. Training, and particularly ongoing training, appears imperative. It may also be important that development programmes for beekeeping are often still organized and technically focussed on aspects that are less relevant in the region of concern. The methods should be adaptive to the locally existing beekeeping tradition and the local ecological environment. But a key factor for success may be the (insufficient) attention dedicated to the cultural characteristics of the local community.

In this edition of NECTAR NEWS we report on activities by Nectar members, particularly Leen van het Leven en Jaap Kerkvliet, and on other points considered of interest to our members. We also refer to some meetings to be held in 2011.

REPORT BY LEEN VAN 'T LEVEN, NECTAR PRESIDENT

SURINAME

As usual Leen van 't Leven visited the Surinam company "SURIBIJ" and worked there with the africanized honeybee (AH) in the districts Commewijne, Wanica and Saramacca. The biggest beekeeper

in Surinam, Kees van Deursen, working with approximately 500 colonies, has been contacted and visited. Beekeeping with the AH in Suriname is mainly based on the availability of an abundance of feral colonies. Bee-swarms are caught the year round with a clear top in the month's July and August. This indicates the beginning of the main honey season till November.

Varroa control is only practised by now and then cutting closed drone brood. A considerable amount of weak and diseased colonies die in the rainy season from May till July. As soon the apiaries can be reached empty hives, often taken over by ants or wax moths, are cleaned and disinfected and set-up again with a new bee-swarm. Sometimes an additional honey-flow can be obtained in the small dry season from February till April.

From reading this it may be concluded that beekeeping is an easy job and practised everywhere. It is not so. The AH cannot be kept close to habitated areas. Main honey-flows are found in areas densely covered with secondary forest. Apiaries mostly have to be situated in badly accessible places. Access roads vanish within three month's under a meters high vegetative cover. Also flooding of the roads is a problem. Maintenance of access roads and apiaries is a heavy burden on the beekeeper. Besides the defensiveness of the bees this too prevents people to want to keep bees and produce honey. In Suriname only six or seven beekeepers produce honey for the market.

To keep up the amount of colonies in the apiaries it is extremely important to catch bee-swarms. Van Deursen kept about 130 bait-hives around Paramaribo in rural areas. He paid people with a small bottle of honey if they warned him for an occupied bait-hive. The result is shown in the following table:

Amount of bee-swarms caught with about 130 bait-hives

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
January	2	20	35	4	13	23	3
February	1	19	13	3	4	13	0
March	12	5	6	15	8	21	16
April	3	13	8	18	5	43	14
May	1	5	9	17	11	14	3
June	13	12	46	2	9	9	4
July	34	21	108	38	72	51	11
August	26	61	68	80	47	110	
September	40	88	49	37	27	19	
October	40	21	25	28	15	5	
November	59	3	28	42	17	17	
December	34	34	35	31	8	13	
Total	265	302	430	315	236	347	
X	16,9	10,2	12,9	8,7	16,2		

X is average honey production in kg per occupied hive in December

The year 2010 was expected to become an under average production year. Van Deursen as well as Suribij did not catch enough swarms to bring their production capacity up to level.

Last year I mentioned in the newsletter a problem with dying colonies placed on the savannah for the honey-flow of *Humeria balsamifera*. Before the hives a lot of yellow matter was found. Under the microscope David Roubik identified it as pollen dust with nematodes.

This year a bit more research was done. Van Deursen found during the savannah honey-flow nematodes in cells with fresh pollen reserves. He concluded that the yellow matter from last year was the clean up by the bees of nematode infested bee-bread cells.

In our newsletters I often could work out interesting information obtained from the biggest beekeeper in Suriname Kees van Deursen. This year August, two weeks after interviewing him extensively, I got the message that van Deursen died. He was robbed and murdered by a young man from the neighbourhood. A few times before Van Deursen experienced armed robbery. This time, because obviously van Deursen knew the man, he was not allowed to survive. I knew van Deursen from the early seventies. He came to Suriname as a biology teacher for a secondary school. Soon he did not like the free behavior of the students and started beekeeping and fruit and vegetable production. To be able to obtain the plot for agricultural production he had to take up Surinam nationality. When the Africanized honeybee invaded the country he, together with former Nectar-member Jos Beerlink, myself and a few tough Surinamese beekeepers, had an important impact on the survival of beekeeping in Suriname. The death of Kees van Deursen is considered a great loss to beekeeping community.

The labourers of van Deursen manage now the beekeeping enterprise. Two brothers of van Deursen deal with the inheritance. Knowing Surinamese conditions they will experience this as a difficult and may be in future an impossible task. The beekeepers of Suriname expect the enterprise to succumb slowly which is generally felt a pity.

AGROMISA

In cooperation with Agromisa Foundation Nectar produced in 2005 a fully revised edition of Agrodok 32, *Beekeeping in the tropics*. In the same year Nectar produced the first edition of Agrodok 42, *Bee products*.

Both agrodoks were translated in French and Portuguese. In the past five years these two agrodoks became the books best sold of the series. In developing countries there seems to be a big need of easily read instruction material on beekeeping.

Recently Agrodok 32 has been translated in Swahili.

The Agromisa Foundation has financial problems to keep up their services. They request donations of 9 euro per book to be able to send it free of cost to beekeepers in developing countries. Info:

www.Agromisa.nl

NBV – INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

The collaboration of Nectar with the international committee of the NBV is working properly. However most of the requests coming to that committee are for money and materials and are not our subject and interest. Advises on beekeeping in the tropics could be taken care of by recommending procurement of the two Agrodok booklets.

42° INTERNATIONAL APICULTURAL CONGRESS APIMONDIA 2011 BUENOS AIRES – ARGENTINA

*Congress: From 21st to 25th, September 2011,
Technical Tours: 26th and 27th, September 2011*

APIMONDIA CONGRESSES WORLD WIDE

Every two years all the beekeepers of the world gather with the apicultural researchers, supplies manufacturers, honey-traders and all the representatives of the apicultural sector, in a big event that is the International Apiculture Congress of APIMONDIA. This impressive meeting that has been taking place since the beginning of this century, is hosted every time by a different country from around the globe, generating an exchange of experiences among beekeepers and all the members of the apiculture practice. Every time this meeting takes place, the host country has the opportunity to show its apiculture to the world.

For ten years now, the members of the Argentinean Beekeepers Association (SADA) have been considering the great importance of this event and also the need to be the host again, after more than 30 years of not hosting the Congress in this region. In 2007, after several presentations, Argentina was chosen to be the venue in 2011.

THE CONGRESS IN ARGENTINA

The biggest event because it gathers more than 10,000 participants from more than 70 countries members of APIMONDIA. Because it has 2,700 square meters for apicultural companies from all over the world so they can offer their products to hundreds of beekeepers that want to find the best and the latest in terms of sanitation, nutrition, tools, machineries, services, supplies, technology and other products related to a better and greater performance in their production.

ARGENTINE APICULTURE

The Apiculture: in the last couple of years, Argentina has become a great global supplier of high quality honey to the international market, produced under a system of good manufacturing practices that assure the quality and traceability of products from the beehive. Argentina has positioned itself as an important exporter, not only of honey but also of living material, equipment, machinery and knowledge. Information: www.apimondia2011.

"CINAT", INSTITUTE FOR BEE RESEARCH AND TRAINING IN COSTA RICA

The first steps for the development of the present Centro de Investigaciones Apícolas Tropicales (CINAT) of the Universidad Nacional, Heredia, Costa Rica were taken in 1993. It started with a cooperative project of the Universidad Nacional, Costa Rica and Utrecht University in the Netherlands. At present CINAT is an interdisciplinary bee research institute that aims at the development of beekeeping in Costa Rica and its neighbouring countries in Central America. The aim is a sustainable apicultural production as an ecological and socioeconomic activity and the conservation of the biodiversity of bees.

The institute is well equipped and staffed with a number of eight professional researchers and high level technicians. The following programmes are carried out:

- Bee health, focussed on bee diseases and pests present in the area.
- Bee genetics and apicultural production, focussed on the improvement of Africanized Honeybees.
- Meliponiculture, the study and improvement of beekeeping with stingless bees.

-Ecology and Pollination, the use of bee colonies in pollination programmes and the conservation of natural flora (mainly focussed on tropical forests).

-Apicultural chemics, directed at the diversification and quality control of apicultural products.

-Apicultural microbiology, a study and application of the microbiology of tropical honeys.

-"Program Regional de Apicultura y Meliponicultura" development programme for beekeeping and stingless beekeeping, ongoing activities of regional cooperative project with Utrecht University.

-Ongoing apicultural education, programme of educational activities in many related fields.

-Postgraduate programme for international students and students from Costa Rica.

In relation to the extension and training programme of CINAT several guide books have been produced.

These can be ordered via the website. The most recent publication is a book on

"*Enfermedades de las abejas melíferas, con énfasis en abejas africanizadas*" by Rafael A. Calderón Fallas y Fernando Ramírez Arias.

CINAT brings out a nice and informative newsletter in Spanish: Revista Notas Apícolas. This is available

free of charge as a internet journal. The next edition will include: a review concerning "bees as

environmental indicators", an article about a new hive type for Melipona and the production of a cream

on the basis of bee wax. There will also be a note on the occurrence of *Nosema ceranae* in Costa Rica.

For a free abonnement on this newsletter, please contact Luis Gabriel Zamora, lzamora@una.ac.cr or

Karla Barquera, kbarquer@una.ac.cr.

STINGLESS BEEKEEPING IN MEXICO AND OTHER COUNTRIES IN LATIN AMERICA

VII Mesoamerican Seminar on Native Bees, Cuetzalan, Puebla, Mexico, from May 11th to 13rd.

For Mesoamerican countries, native bees represent cultural and ecological richness, as well as a potential for sustainable development. Culturally, several of these species have been cultivated for centuries by prehispanic people, and their breeding is today newly increasing. Ecologically, the diversity of local bee fauna is considerable in the Mesoamerican region, with a special degree of endemism due to biogeographic factors. Economically, native bees provide high quality honey and key pollination services to native plants and crops.

Within this context, the Unión de Cooperativas Tosepan and El Colegio de la Frontera Sur are pleased to invite researchers, students, beekeepers and the general public to participate in the VII Mesoamerican Seminar on Stingless Bees. This event, previous courses and field trips will be held in Cuetzalan, Puebla, Mexico, from 10 to 14 May 2011.

In addition to its historical importance, Cuetzalan was chosen as the home for this seminar because of the traditional keeping of a native stingless bee, *Scaptotrigona mexicana*, named *Pisilnekmej* in Nahuatl language, which is still spoken there. This stingless beekeeping is a growing practice that makes it possible to join ancient traditions and contemporary rural activities. It has become an significant economic alternative that generates sufficient income to families of coffee growers as well as to people

ORGANIZERS
La Unión de Cooperativas Tosepan is a large organization with more than 15,000 members, mostly small-scale indigenous growers of coffee, pepper, citrus, macadamia and virgin honey. Relatively recently Tosepan has fostered the keeping of stingless bees using traditional techniques, becoming the largest organization producing virgin honey in Mexico.

El Colegio de la Frontera Sur (ECOSUR) is a public research center. Through its research group "Abejas de Chiapas", it aims at generating knowledge about native bees, both at basic and applied levels, hence contributing to the sustainable development of rural activities that consider keeping native bees.

AIMS

The aims of the seminar are to: -Share scientific and technical knowledge on the management and multiplication of native bees, and on their importance in crop pollination. -Exchange recent information on the topic of native bees. -Strengthen the integration of people interested in developing stingless beekeeping as a production and development tool. -Encourage the creation of a network of native bees honey producers -Value the properties stingless bees products (medicine, gastronomy, cosmetics, etc.) -Promote Cuetzalan as the Santuario de la Abeja Melipona (Sanctuary of the Melipona Bee).

INVITATION

The preparation of the seminar is going well, and it will be a pleasure to receive you in this land of the bee *Scaptotrigona mexicana*, still managed following the prehispanic tradition.

BEES FOR DEVELOPMENT'S INFORMATION PORTAL

As we know "Bees for Development" (www.beesfordevelopment.org) presents a vast range of bee-related information. The information bulletin *Bees for Development Journal* is one of the most important means of information on tropical beekeeping worldwide. This *Journal* includes practical advice on beekeeping and management techniques, future events (including training programmes) and reports from beekeeping projects and associations worldwide. It provides an avenue into the beekeeping network which is important for information exchange and making new contacts. Recently new

sponsoring has made it possible for BfD to start a webservice "**Bees for Development's Information Portal**". Opening the website (<http://www.beesfordevelopment.org/portal/>) one can find a very large amount of information on nearly all important topics of tropical beekeeping and beekeeping for rural development. Items are mostly provided as articles within the website or as external links.

The following is based on information from the BfD website, which is mainly directed at rural beekeepers themselves. Bees for Development works to improve access to information about apiculture (beekeeping), around the world. The guiding philosophy of **Bees for Development** is that information is the key to development and BfD works hard to enable people throughout the world to access the information they need. BfD makes information available on their website and in the unique **Bees for Development Journal**. If you would like to receive a sponsored subscription to the journal, please check the website: www.beesfordevelopment.org/information.

The network centre of BfD enables beekeepers to share information and experience with others. BfD wants to help all members of the beekeeping community, however the focus is those who are most marginalised and vulnerable. This means that BfD is in touch with others who work with the most hard-to-reach, and they communicate regularly with small-scale beekeepers.

It is important to BfD that you can find the information you need from this website. You can visit the extensive online library of information, the Information Portal, and read reports and articles covering all bee species and beekeeping practices present around the world.

The BfD information portal is continually updated with the latest research findings from across the world. BfD produces and distributes appropriate training programmes and practical guides carefully tailored to meet needs, based on training requirements, local beekeeping methods and location. If you are interested in receiving training materials you can apply to receive a resource box from BfD.

NECTAR ACTIVITIES DURING 2010 BY OUR MEMBER JACOB D. KERKVLIELT

Cooperation with publication on Algerian honey analysis

A few years ago Mrs. Chahra Makhloufi invited me to cooperate in the writing of a paper for APIDOLOGIE. This year the paper was published in APIDOLOGIE 41 (2010) 509-521 and titled: **Characterization of Algerian honeys by palynological and physico-chemical methods***
Authors were: Chahra Makhloufi¹, Jacob D. Kerkvliet², Giancarlo Ricciardelli D'albore³, Ali Choukri⁴, Riad Samar⁵

1) Université ibn Khaldoun Tiaret, Faculté des Sciences Agronomiques et Vétérinaires, 14000 Tiaret, Algeria

2) Netherlands Expertise Centre for Tropical Apicultural Resources, c/o Twickelstraat 9, 7651JH Tubbergen, The Netherlands

3) Dipartimento di Scienze Agraria Università degli Studi di Perugia, Borgo XX Giugno, 06121 Perugia, Italy

4) Centre Universitaire de Djelfa. Institut d'Agro pastoralisme, 17000 Djelfa, Algeria

5) 10 route de Sougueur, 14000 Tiaret, Algeria

Abstract of this publication – Sixty-six Algerian honeys were sampled for investigation on their palynological and physicochemical properties. Results showed that the total number of pollen grains in 10 g honey ranged from 2.1×10^3 to 1.12×10^6 . In total 124 pollen species were identified and the main pollen forms were *Eucalyptus* spp., *Olea europaea*, *Papaver rhoeas*, *Pimpinella anisum*, *Carduus* sp. and *Hedysarum coronarium*.

Unifloral eucalypt honeys could be distinguished from other honeys from the western Mediterranean region by the presence of *P. rhoeas* and *Centaurea* species. Physico-chemical analyses included moisture content, pH, electrical conductivity, diastase, invertase, HMF and 11 sugars. Of these parameters the electrical conductivity was somewhat elevated compared to European honeys, sucrose content was below 4.3% and only small amounts of di- and trisaccharides were present.

In general the samples were found to meet the requirements of the international honey standards.

Miscellaneous enquiries dealt with by Jacob Kerkvliet

Assoua Dimitris of a nongovernmental organization based in Cameroon, named Rural Development through Apiculture (RUDA) and carrying out activities on bee farming since 2004 asked, for the two Agrodok books on beekeeping and bee products. His request was sent to Agromisa.

Clifford Obuy, a young beekeeper based in the Lake Victoria basin (Kendu-Bay), Kenya, wanted more information on beekeeping. He had 19 Kenya Top bar hives of which 11 are colonized. Also his request was sent to Agromisa

BEEKEEPING COURSES FOR TROPICAL STUDENTS

Several beekeeping courses and training courses for students from tropical countries are organized in various countries. The most complete information is generally found in the Bees for Development Journal (info@beesfordevelopment.org), see above. One of the courses from which we recently heard is the following:

International Course on Modern Apiculture Management: Honey, By-products and Pollination, 15 May to 1 June 2011, Israel

Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation and Center for International Agricultural Development Cooperation organize an International Course on Modern Apiculture Management from 15 May to 1 June 2011. This course is geared towards professionals involved in apiculture, especially from developing and less developed countries. Candidates should hold an academic degree in related disciplines, and have at least two years of professional work experience in related fields. Priority will be given to professional staff involved in national/regional projects, with and/or under the aegis of governmental institutions, national and/or international organizations, research institutes, universities, NGOs, etc.

DEAR READERS, PLEASE INFORM US ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES ON TROPICAL BEEKEEPING

We are very interested in learning from your activities related to tropical beekeeping. Your short report is valuable for other people. Please send us your information. We will gladly include this in the next edition of NECTAR NEWS. We also are grateful for your comments and suggestions. Please use the email address listed above.

Rinus Sommeijer