



DEVELOPING RADIO PARTNERS

Focus: Modern vs Traditional Bee Keeping

Bee-keeping is the practice of artificially maintaining honeybee colonies.

Bee-keeping is an important source of income for rural households -- and eating honey can improve people's diets.

There are two types of insects that produce honey in Zambia. The indigenous African bee which produces most of the honey and bee wax and there is also the stingless bees which produce sweet honey-like substances.

The traditional way of bee keeping -- such as the use of tree bark can be very destructive to the ecosystem as some trees are cut down to remove the tree bark for making hives.

People are now encouraged to use modern wooden frame hives which can be moved easily from place to place to increase pollination -- particularly for such crops as sunflowers and citrus fruits.

The Weekly

Information Resource Bulletin

The goals of the Weekly Bulletin are:

- Bring listeners in the project area the latest information on natural resources, the environment and agriculture
- Focus on solutions, what works and what people can do
- Encourage listeners to share both their questions and solutions (African solutions for African problems)
- Raise awareness of issues that need to be discussed to affect public policy.
- Bring the latest solutions and practices that have relevance to this region from around the world
- Identify and link other NGOs working in the region share the project interests and goals
- Give the participating journalists guidance and tips on their reporting on these issues

The Problem: Unsustainable Bee-keeping

Bee-keeping provides a wide range of social and ecological benefits. The need to increase household food security and crop yield pose a serious threat to beekeeping. In the Central Province of Zambia, beekeepers have complained that bees are being killed by the use of cotton pesticides.

Deforestation is another big threat to beekeeping. Woodlands are being cut for settlements, crop production and charcoal making.

Tree bark hives are the most locally-preferred because they are easy to construct and don't cost anything. Yet, these bark hives are destructive to the ecosystem as many mature trees are cut down leading to deforestation.

Bee-keeping not only provides income and a food source, the bees, themselves, provide an important service to the ecosystem via pollination.

Pollination contributes to the improvement of biodiversity by maintaining the genetic diversity of plants and the maintenance of the ecological balance.

Beekeeping and honey production depend on forest, woodlands, rivers, lakes and wetlands. The depletion of these resources will undermine the sustainability of bee-keeping and honey production.

Honey provides a wide range of health benefits such as cough medicine, treating wounds, and it can be an energy booster.

Solutions: Activities for Journalists

How can you protect honeybees?

Farmers should avoid or reduce the amount of pesticides in their fields. Some pesticides can kill honeybees.

Find out from your radio listeners if they have observed anything regarding the behavior of honeybees after spraying their fields with weed killers or pesticides? For instance, are they seeing fewer honeybees?

Farmers can create a home for bees by making insect-friendly gardens that provide nesting sites for bees.

Find out from listeners what kind of plants in their fields or gardens that honeybees seem to like the most?

Farmers can attract bees in their fields by not removing flowering plants and trees. Bees need clusters of flowers.

Find out from your listeners about the kinds of benefits they get from bees?

Encourage bee-keepers to use modern hives.

Deforestation has a direct negative effect on beekeeping as tree-cutting destroys the habitats for the bees. So, the planting and preserving of trees is one way of attracting

bees.

Do your listeners consume a lot of honeybee products?

Would your listeners like to keep bees. If so, they can visit the Forestry Department or a Ministry of Agriculture extension officer to learn how to become beekeepers.

Bees can be dangerous if not well-managed.

Find out from listeners how much they know about the dangers of bees if not well managed.

Bee-keeping training is provided by the Forestry Department and the Zambia Forestry College in Kitwe.

Useful Links

Information about farming and the environment:
Makweti Sishekanu, National Farmers Union Zambia:
+260-211-252-649 or +260-965-098-360. Email:
makwetiskanu@yahoo.com

Good source of information: Vincent Ziba- FAO
Zambia; Email: vinceziba@yahoo.com. Phone: 0966-
246-924

Mwape Sichilongo, World Wildlife Federation
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