



## Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Mining



*Investment in the Beekeeping  
Sub-sector*

# **Status of the Beekeeping Industry**

The Beekeeping Industry in Jamaica is the fastest growing subsectors in agriculture at this time. There has been more than 50% increase in the number of hives over the past ten years (2008-2018).

The demand for hive products have been increasing both on the local and export market. This however has resulted in more than 90% increase in the price of bee products over the period 2014 to 2018.

## **Beekeeping has a lot of advantages. Some of these are:**

- \* It does not require large acreages to establish an apiary
- \* It is not labour intensive
- \* It can be done by persons of any age or gender
- \* Other activities can run concurrently with moderate operations
- \* Most activities in the apiary are timely or seasonal
- \* The returns on investment is high (though heavily dependent on the level of management)
- \* Bees do not compete with man nor other animals for their food and space
- \* That which is gathered and converted by the bees for the use of man could not otherwise be collected economically.
- \* Bees plays a major role in pollination of crops for our food security.

## Sourcing of Bee stock

Jamaica's honey bee is a hybrid which derives from three races. These races include the Italian honeybee (*Aphis mellifera lingustica*), Caucasian honeybee (*Aphis mellifera caucasica*) and the German black bees (*Aphis mellifera*). Physical features of these genetic lines are evident in anyone colony of honeybees in Jamaica. It is therefore difficult to find a colony which is pure, that is, of one specific race.

## Sourcing Bees

In sourcing stock for the establishment of a new apiary it is imperative that careful selection be undertaken in order to ensure you acquire quality bee with desired traits. Inspection for pest and disease status is another factor, as high infestation levels may result in the loss of colonies. The American Foul Brood (AFB) disease must be avoided at all cost as there is no cure or recommended treatment for this disease in Jamaica. All AFB Infected colonies therefore must be promptly destroyed by fire.

Your Apiculture Extension Officer operating from the Apiculture Unit, Research and Development Division of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, at the Bodles Research Station **must** be contacted for assistance when purchasing bees colonies.

## **Market Local**

The sale of honey in Jamaica is traditionally measured by a 5-gallon pail, which currently fetches \$35,000 at the farm gate. The 1kg (750ml) bottle which is widely used fetches upward of \$2000 each at the retail price. Each pail {bucket} of honey contains approximately 24 - 1kg bottles of honey (24 X 750ml bottles).

Local production of honey is no where near its demand both locally and abroad. Several private honey packaging facilities are being established across the island which are been built in compliance to international standard. Several individuals and companies are now involved or has an interest in the export of honey to the UK and across the United States of America.

On the other hand some beekeepers directly supply honey to shops, supermarkets and health food stores. The hotels are now being strategically targeted.

## **Technical Assistance**

The Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries in Jamaica provides technical assistance on all aspects of beekeeping. This is done though a team of Apiculture Extension Specialist assigned to the Apiculture Unit, Research and Development Division, Bodles, St. Catherine.

## Products of the Beehive

The products of a beehive are diverse and all are of economic importance. Each product commands good wholesale/ retail prices. When one decide to rear bee it must be pre-determined what product he wants to produce. The production of several hive products can run concurrently without causing a negative impact on each other.

<b>Product</b>	<b>Average annual production / hive</b>	<b>Current cost</b>	<b>Market</b>
Honey	5 gal	J\$7,500 per gal	Local, North America & Europe
Bee Pollen	10lbs (4.5kg) / hive	J\$3,300 - \$4,400 / kg	Local & Foreign
Propolis	2.2 lb (1.0kg) / hive	J\$6,650 / kg	Europe
Royal Jelly	-	US\$80 / ounce	Local & Foreign
Queen Bees	Dependent on size of operation	J\$2,000 each US\$25 each	Local North America
Packaged bees	“	US\$180 / kg	North America
Beehive single	“	J\$18,000-\$20,000	Local
Bee Venom	“	-	-
Bees wax	0.3 lb. /0.13kg / hive/year	J\$900 / kg	Local

The above table identifies the products and current market prices as well as possible markets.

## Establishing a 50 colony Apiary

<b>Proposed Procurement</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Unit Cost (J\$)</b>	<b>Total Cost (J\$)</b>
<b>Bee Hives/Colonies</b>	50	18,000	900,000
<b>Hive Bodies</b>	100	1,300	130,000
<b>Hive Covers</b>	30	800	24,000
<b>Bottom Boards</b>	30	800	24,000
<b>Queen Excluders</b>	30	1,100	33,000
<b>Bee Frames</b>	650	130	84,500
<b>Comb Foundation (kg)</b>	70	4,000	280,000
<b>Bee Veil</b>	2	2,500	5,000
<b>Bee Smoker</b>	1	9,000	9,000
<b>Hive Tool</b>	1	1,100	1,100
<b>Honey Extractor</b>	1	120,000	120,000
			<u>1,610,600</u>

## Important Notes

- All apiaries must be registered with the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, Apiculture Unit, Bodles, Old Harbour upon establishment. If not 30 days after establishing or the first of January each year.

### **This information must include the following**

- (a) Beekeeper's Name
- (b) Address and phone number
- (c) Location of apiary and number of colonies
- (d) Owner's TRN number.



- Hive must be treated annually (June – August) against Varroa mite infestation;
- Other pest management initiative is critical to hive survival.
- Transportation permit is required from the Apiculture Unit when transporting bees.

### **Approximate Rate of Returns on investment**

Each hive established can yield an average of 5.3 gallons (31 kg) of honey annually. Valuing

\$7,500 per gallon – \$39,750/hive/annum

The first 50 hives =265 gals of honey @\$7,500 / gallon - \$1,987,500.00

## **Sourcing Beekeeping Equipment/ Bee Colonies**

### **Where equipment can be purchased**

- Honey Comb Industries – 876 984-4004
- Richards Woodwork – 876 566-6363
- Ital Honey- 876 774-1764
- St. Jago Farm Supplies – 876 981-1510
- Beekeepers World – 876 862-9178
- Johnson’s Bee Supplies-- 876 816-8627

### **Apiculture Unit Staff**

- Chief Plant Protection Officer, Mr. Hugh Smith— Island wide: 876–464-4268
- Senior Plant Protection Officer, Mr. Gregory Lynch—Island wide : 876– 292-6427
- Mr. Kwesi Palmer- Portland, St. Mary & St. Thomas : 876-506-5126
- Mrs. Suzette Bernard Miller— St. Catherine, Kingston & St. Andrew: 876-443-4187
- Mr. Attoy Williams—St. Elizabeth & Westmorland: 876-840-7274
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