

FOREWORD

The Food Production and Rural Development of the Commonwealth Secretariat is charged with the responsibility of facilitating increased and accelerated food production and rural development in the Commonwealth.

It seeks to fulfil this function in various ways, for example, by acting as a clearing house for pertinent information and giving assistance to governments in various fields such as project preparation, project management, the development and transfer of rural technology, the reduction of post-harvest losses, and livestock and fisheries development.

To a certain extent the Division responds to requests from governments. However, an equally important role is that of catalysing thought and, hopefully, practical action by governments and other organisations in specific subject areas where there appears to be potential for profitable endeavour.

A cardinal guiding principle adopted by the Division is that its endeavours should be concentrated on projects that stand a good chance of conferring recognizable benefit to the rural poor in the shortest possible time. Thus, while the Division recognizes the important role that large, multi-million and multifaceted projects play in increasing food production and accelerating rural development, it has also been conscious of the value of what may be called micro-projects, which often involve minimal government and imported inputs and are potentially capable of increasing rural earnings within a relatively short time, providing they are executed with the necessary dedication.

In its catalytic role, the Division circulated early in 1978, an offer of free bibliographies on beekeeping available from the International Bee Research Association and funded by the International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, to Governments and invited them to communicate with the Division if they were interested.

In circulating the offer the Division was of the view that apiculture could be a source of valuable food and rural earnings. Honey is a much prized food both locally and abroad. Beeswax is in good demand and well priced. Bees can aid the pollination (and, therefore, production levels) of crops. Apiculture can be undertaken as a rural family venture without significantly interfering with normal farming activities; and, it can create a demand for locally manufactured equipment and thus aid both the development of appropriate technology and the creation of off-farm rural employment. For countries with very

limited renewable resources it could be an important source of income.

One of the responses we received said among other things:

"We have found that one of the problems was scarcity of beeswax used as a mould in the process the need to set up a bee-keeping industry to assist these poor brass founders".

Another said:

"I understand that your association (SIC) has published a book on beekeeping May I know how I can study the art and act of beekeeping? God bless you".

The genesis of this publication may be found in such responses to our original circular. We believe that in bringing together this selection of articles on a wide range of experiences - from various parts of the tropics, with emphasis on the Commonwealth - successes, failures, and problems - interested individuals and organisations will be encouraged to examine the potential and value of apiculture more easily.

The Commonwealth is an ideal framework within which to circulate expertise on beekeeping, for beekeeping is practised at all levels - from the highly developed and mechanized systems used in developed Commonwealth countries, to the fledgling projects and wild honey gathering among its developing members. Thus, through a common language, persons and organisations with experience at all levels can share their knowledge and assist one another.

In this publication will be found examples of sensible endeavour from modest beginnings, backed by research, training, long-range perspectives, consistent application, and practical incentives to producers rather than mere exhortations. These examples may be found among others, in Belize, Kenya, Tanzania and India where substantial contributions are being made to the national economy in this way.

Also in this publication, may be found examples of the importance of training and co-operation between Commonwealth countries - by Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and in sharing training facilities in the developing Commonwealth itself such as in India and the Forest Training Institute at Olmotonyi in Arusha, Tanzania.

The Commonwealth Secretariat is keen on helping to collect and exchange information and in providing such training and advisory assistance as fall within its purview and would be happy to hear from interested readers. Communications should be addressed to:

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