

Proceedings of “National Seminar on Beekeeping”

A “National Seminar on Beekeeping” was held at NDDDB, Anand on 10th February 2017. The participants included Chairman, NDDDB, ED, NDDDB, ED, National Bee Board (NBB), MD, GCMMF, Senior representatives from milk federations, milk unions, Producer Companies, progressive beekeeping farmers and NDDDB officials.

The seminar deliberated on promoting beekeeping amongst dairy farmers as an additional source of livelihood and pathways for achieving appropriate convergence between the activities of dairying and beekeeping in the dairy cooperative network.

Chairman NDDDB, Shri Dilip Rath in his welcome address stated that engaging milk producers in multiple streams of income through their livelihood diversification is important for building their economic resilience and well-being. The strength of the dairy cooperative's network can be leveraged for planning suitable interventions in beekeeping for boosting honey production in the country.

In his agenda setting remarks ED NDDDB, Shri Sangram Chaudhary spoke about trends in honey production globally and opportunities for beekeepers in India. He emphasized that beekeeping has immense potential to generate income without destroying habitats as it encourages biodiversity. The dairy federations in the country can provide market linkage for beekeepers to sell their products.

Summary of Seminar deliberations:

ED, NBB, Dr B L Saraswat spoke about the status of beekeeping in the country and how beekeeping can help in solving few of the agriculture related issues in the country. Dr Saraswat explained about various bee species, honey & other beehive products, their benefits and economics of beekeeping. Pollination leads to increase in yield of oilseeds, pulses and fruits by 20% to 100%. Dr Saraswat stressed on following due scientific methods for taking up beekeeping as a profession, failing which it may turn into loss making proposition.

In-charge Honey project, Banas Dairy, Dr Mahesh Bhatol, spoke about launching of Village Based Beekeeping and Honey Production (VBBHP) project for the farmers in the district.

Member, National Bee Board and beekeeping farmer, Shri Jaidev Singh spoke about his journey of beekeeping as a profession. Those intending to take up this profession should first equip themselves with appropriate technical and scientific knowledge related to bees to handle any situation encountered in course of beekeeping.

Talking about experience of marketing honey under Safal brand, General Manager (Supply Chain Management), Shri Mihir Mohanta, Mother Dairy underlined the connect honey establishes with farmers and consumers alike. Emphasizing the need for purity, he lamented the fact that more technology is available for adulterating the honey rather than making honey.

In his presentation regarding present scenario of honey testing, Director (CALF), NDDDB, Shri Rajesh Nair spoke about the need for upgrading testing facilities for purity of honey as per international standards. Currently, authenticity check of honey is getting outsourced by major exporters due to lack of facilities in India.

In the open discussion regarding a possible organization structure for beekeeping, it was suggested that a National level organisation structure modelled on cooperative/producer company lines should be evolved to promote scientific beekeeping.

Way Forward

No	Action Point	Responsibility
1.	Following this 'National Seminar on Beekeeping' different region/state level workshops/awareness programmes for interested dairy farmers affiliated with milk unions will be organized with the support of NBB.	NDDDB / NBB/State Dairy Federations
2.	Interested milk unions will be supported in initiating pilot projects of scientific beekeeping. NBB to make available requisite technical expertise/training & capacity building/grant and other requisite support in this regard.	NBB/NDDDB/State Dairy Federations
3.	NCDFI is to be requested for developing an organisation structure for promoting beekeeping among affiliated dairy cooperatives and support related activities for the same.	NCDFI/NDDDB
4.	NDDDB will submit a project proposal to NBB for developing a testing facility for checking purity and quality of honey with the support of NBB.	NDDDB/NBB
5.	NDDDB will pursue with major dairy federations to test market honey and with NBB certificate of purity and quality in compliance with FSSAI.	NDDDB/NBB/State Dairy Federations

In the concluding session, Shri Rajesh Gupta, Team Leader (Cooperative Services), NDDDB thanked all the speakers and participants for meaningful deliberations and hoped that as bees work collectively in true cooperative spirit, the dairy cooperatives of our country will also strive towards providing our farmers with additional source of income by suitable interventions in beekeeping.