

REPORT ON THE ZAMBIA HONEY SECTOR STUDY 2010

ZHC represents the interests of key players in the Honey Industry, such as beekeepers, honey buyers, processors, packers and exporters. It commissioned a Honey study for the year 2010 in Zambia. The objective was to establish a ZHC beekeeper data base covering all honey producing districts and acquire honey sector research information covering domestic production and consumption levels, import and export analysis. It is through this report that ZHC was able to access information on honey production through relevant bodies, and got information with regards to quantities of honey that go into the local and international markets. The study established that there are 45 honey producing districts in Zambia. The study was intended to generate information that will enable the ZHC develop a strategy for the long term development of the Sector. It is also a means of constructing a honey value chain model for the development of the Zambian Honey marketing system.

The study was conducted successfully although there were a number of factors that affected the execution of the study, such as it being conducted during the rainy season thus making some areas inaccessible. Results obtained are based on a snow ball sample and not highly representative of all the beekeepers.

Findings indicated that North western province is the leading honey producer in the country; other significant producers of Honey are the Copperbelt province and Eastern province. Most beekeepers appeared not to be deriving the maximum benefits from the honey industry due to lack of knowledge about the Honey markets.

Beekeepers lack the regulatory framework cost guide and often beekeepers are paid less for their products. Beekeepers often lack means of transporting their honey to the urban markets and lack knowledge about modern honey production techniques.

The study also revealed that most Honey buyers were not transparent in their activities and honey production is a male dominated activity, with men selling more honey than women. Most of the honey buyers/ traders are not registered or are dealing with unregistered agents that are not known by the district authorities. A total of 23 honey buyers were identified and interviewed throughout the country, most of them are relatively new in the honey industry as they started their business after the year 2000 while others either started during the 1990's or before that. The oldest business in the honey sector in Zambia was registered in 1948.

Beekeeping in most areas of the country remains neglected as local people do not realize the benefits of this economic activity. Other significant variables are education and how long one has been in the beekeeping industry. It was discovered that those with tertiary education had higher production using modern techniques of honey production compared to those with lower education who by and large, still depend on traditional beekeeping methods.

The report also indicates that Zambia honey exports are much higher than its honey imports. Zambia exports natural honey and other honey products to Europe, America, China, Japan, Central Africa and Southern Africa.

Despite the Honey sector's potential, the contribution of honey towards the country's total export revenue is still quite insignificant. The sector accounts for less than 0.01% of the country's total export earnings. However revenue from honey exports has been steadily rising since the year 2000.

In order to strengthen the Honey Sector, various recommendations have been put in place; developing a beekeeper data base in every district which is updated annually, consistent training of beekeepers on all aspects of honey production and marketing. ZHC is on the verge of helping honey firms get loans for their commercial activities, opening up more regional offices and recruit more officers so as to effectively coordinate and monitor activities in the honey sector. ZHC is currently partnering with government to make recommendations on the floor price of honey, and is working with relevant ministries to collect information on bee keeping during national economic surveys.

Despite various limitations, once managed properly, the honey industry can be one of the most profitable enterprises for the rural poor and can make a significant contribution towards poverty reduction in Zambia.