

Bee keeping: A profitable venture

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Rearing of honey bees is called Apiculture. Keeping bees at a large scale for commercial purpose as a business plan is increasing in this fast growing world. Apiculture business need less investment but it require labours with great care. It is hard to keep bees as the business if proper knowledge about apiculture is not there as bees are wild in nature. One can easily learn apiculture and can earn more money as profit able enterprise with less effort.

Key words: Apiculture, Farmer FIRST Programme, Vocational training

IN India, honey bee farming is commonly done by the people in the hilly region, but nowadays, this enterprise is also started in the plains by the local people to earn more money applying less effort. People are earning good remuneration by keeping bees only. Starting a bee farming and honey production business comes with its own fair share of challenges, but that does not rule out the fact that it is indeed a profitable enterprise venture needs less labor in this enterprise. An aspiring entrepreneur can either choose to start bee farming and honey production enterprise on a small scale or on a large scale depending on financial status.

Technology, implementation and support

Shri Gulab Singh, S/o Ran Singh, aged 60, VPO- Gurana, Tehsil Hansi, District-Hisar, Haryana, has adopted beekeeping as entrepreneurship in 2016. Being a small farmer owing less than 4 acre of land, it was very difficult to meet family needs. In 2016, Chaudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agricultural University comes as a ray of light for him under Farmers FIRST Programme (FFP). Vocational training on beekeeping was organized at village Gurana (Hisar) under FFP project and 20



farmers participated. Specialized interactive lectures were delivered by the resource person of CCS HAU Hisar. At the end of the training, Sh. Gulab Singh showed keen interest in the enterprise. Keeping this in view, CCS HAU Hisar provided full support to him in establishing a beekeeping unit. He was taken to various well-established units for his exposure towards this subsidiary enterprise. He was provided with three beehive boxes of bee colonies.

Uptake, benefit and spread

Gulab Singh told that agriculture was not enough for his family as area of cultivation was only four acres, so he had to look for other options. The idea of changing occupation is difficult at this age. He attended beekeeping training in December 2016 and received three hive boxes with bee colonies. The time coincided with mustard flowering

and within 12-15 days, he collected 15 kg of honey which attracted his attention more towards beekeeping. In next month, he purchased 10 beehive boxes with colonies at his own and 16-17 days within entire production was 2.20 quintal, which was sold at ₹ 130/kg. The total honey was sold at ₹ 28,700. During the season 2017-18, quantity of boxes reached to 18 and the production was 3.24 q honey amounting ₹ 22,680 (sold @ ₹ 70/kg). The wholesale price of honey was half as compared to the last year. In, December 2018, the season was very favourable for him and he fetched 35 boxes and about 5 q honey amounting ₹ 45,000 (sold @ ₹ 90/kg). The rate was favourable and he was satisfied with the production of honey.

Shri Gulab Singh wants to achieve the target of 100 boxes in next one year. However, to make the vocation more profitable, Gulab Singh has planned to take up his own honey processing unit and retail shops where they get better price of ₹ 230/kg to 250/kg.

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