

## **MODULE 2: THE IMPORTANCE OF BEEKEEPING**

### **Introduction**

Beekeeping is the science and art of rearing bees. It is important to keep bees for the production of honey, beeswax, propolis, pollen (bee bread), royal jelly and bee venom; for food, medicine and income. Beekeeping is also important for pollination and recreational activities.

### **Learning Objectives**

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:-

1. Understand and appreciate the importance of beekeeping in the society.
2. Describe the importance of the various bee products and services.

**Target Participants:** Beekeepers, extension service providers, individuals and organizations/Institutions

**Suggested Number of Participants:** A maximum of 30 persons

**Duration:** 2 hours.

### **Materials**

- Flip chart and masking tape or chalkboard, marker pens or chalk, notebooks and pens, bee products and flowers and fruits/ their pictures, posters, TVs, Projectors, generators, films about bee products and services, and hand outs.

### **Methods**

- Lectures
- Brainstorming
- Group discussions
- Case studies

### **Steps:**

#### **Step 1**

Write the title “The importance of beekeeping” on the chalkboard or flip chart and introduce it.

#### **Step 2**

Engage the participants to brainstorm on why it is important to keep bees.

#### **Step 3**

Allocate the participants in 2 groups and assign them the following tasks:

Group 1      Discuss the importance of beekeeping

Group 2      Explain the importance of each bee product or service

#### **Step 4**

In plenary, participants present findings, the trainer clarifies, summarizes and gives out the hand outs.

## **HAND OUT: THE IMPORTANCE OF BEEKEEPING**

Beekeeping is the science and art of keeping bees using best practices. Beekeeping is very important, for the production of honey, beeswax, propolis, pollen (bee bread), royal jelly and bee venom; for food, medicine and income. Beekeeping is also important for pollination and recreational activities.

There are various reasons for keeping bees, namely:-

### **1. For cultural purposes**

Honey is used for beverage brewing and occasionally served at important cultural ceremonies such as weddings. It is also served to very important guests as sign of high regard. The Maji Maji rebellion used bees as a weapon to defend themselves against the colonialists. Honey was used in Egypt as cosmetics and also for embalming the Egyptians dead pharaohs. Honey was among the tithes and offertory given by the Jews to the Levites in their culture. In some African cultures honey is also used to pay dowry.

### **2. As source of food**

Honey is delicious and nutritious. It is an important food for many people in Uganda. It is consumed whole or mixed with other foods as supplement. Among the Langi and Acholi, honey is mixed with simsim and groundnut paste. Bee brood (larvae and pupae) have high nutritional value and are fed to malnourished children. Royal jelly and pollen are consumed for their high protein value.

### **3. As source of medicine**

Bee products such as bee venom, honey and propolis are used for treatment of many conditions following the antibiotic nature of the products. The conditions/diseases treated using bee products include stomach upsets, diarrhea, vomiting, wounds, burns, cough, measles, false teeth, toothaches and fungal infections. It also helps to boost the immunity of people living with HIV/AIDS.

### **4. For income generation**

The honeybee products can be marketed locally or abroad to get money, with or without value addition. Beekeeping industry also provides incomes to various stakeholders in the value chain. These include bee farmers, artisans, pharmaceutical industry, food, beverage industry, honey dealers among others.

### **5. Pollination**

The honeybees provide pollination services, thereby playing a vital role in food production and overall agricultural productivity. Over 75% of all the crops in sub Saharan Africa benefit from pollination. Bees are considered the most efficient pollinators because they have hairy bodies

which easily pick up pollen grains as they move about in flowers. During a single day one bee may visit several hundred flowers. So bees are important to farmers. More bees means better pollination and high yields. In other countries pollination by bees is hired and fetches additional money to the beekeeper.

## **6. Conservation of natural resources**

Beekeeping is a non destructive activity that could be employed in the conservation of biodiversity in protected areas. Households living adjacent these areas can support the conservation efforts of these resources by establishing apiaries within or at the boundary of these protected areas.

Farmers realizing that vegetation is a source of forage for bees will guard against the destruction and be encouraged to plant more plants for supplying pollen and nectar. In the process many plants are conserved and protected from destruction.

## **7. Hobby**

Other people keep bees as a hobby.

## **8. Api-Tourism and research**

Establishment of bee reserves for purposes of tourist attraction and research holds a big potential for the future.

## **9. Apitherapy**

Bee products are used in the treatment of many human ailments. For example, bee venom is an important remedy for many ailments such as Arthritis, Parkinson disease and other diseases related to the nervous system. The venom can be obtained through bee stings.

## **10. Beekeeping is a cheap undertaking**

- (i) Beekeeping does not involve mass feeding of bees because in most cases the bees provide their own food all year round.
- (ii) All the necessary inputs and technologies required for beekeeping are available locally. Some may be wasted if bees are not kept, e.g. pollen and nectar from flowering plants.
- (iii) Honey and beeswax can be produced in semi-arid areas that are unsuitable for any other agricultural use. The beekeeper requires limited land to keep bees.