

# BEEKEEPING IN TRINIDAD

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## General information

- ▶ Windward island 10.27 N ,61.15W
- ▶ Land area 4,748 m. sq (1833sq miles)
- ▶ El Cerro del Aripo---940m (3080ft)
- ▶ Population 1.2mill

### Landforms

North, Central and Southern ranges

Caroni ,Nariva and Oropouche Swamps

Caroni and Nariva Plains

# Seasons

- ▶ Dry season Jan - Jun

“Petite Carem”

- ▶ Wet season Jul - Dec

These seasons drive what we do in management of AHB in Trinidad

**A.E.S.A.**

Our National flag



# Our National Birds



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# Our National Flower





# We in the Tropical Atlantic















# HISTORY

Prior to 1979, beekeeping in Trinidad was done with European bees (*Apis mellifera linguistica*).

During 1979 the Africanised honeybees arrived in Trinidad from mainland South America. From then till now there have been several levels of 'africanisation' of the hived honeybee.



The indigenous bees of Trinidad are stingless bees (*Apidae, Meliponinae*) and the management of these had been practised in Trinidad for centuries before the management of European honeybees.

The first established colony of AHB (*Apis mellifera scutellata*) was found in South Trinidad in 1979. All honeybees in Trinidad became Africanised in a few years and beekeeping was **irreversibly** changed.

This resulted in:

Defensive honeybee

High swarming rate(200+/mth)

Stinging incidences

A decline in beekeepers

The decline of beekeeping was exacerbated by

Dismantling of the Apiaries Unit circa 1985 and consequent reduction in Governmental support.



# Legislation

Beekeeping and Bee Products Act (Chap. 67:53)

10 Sections

66 Regulations

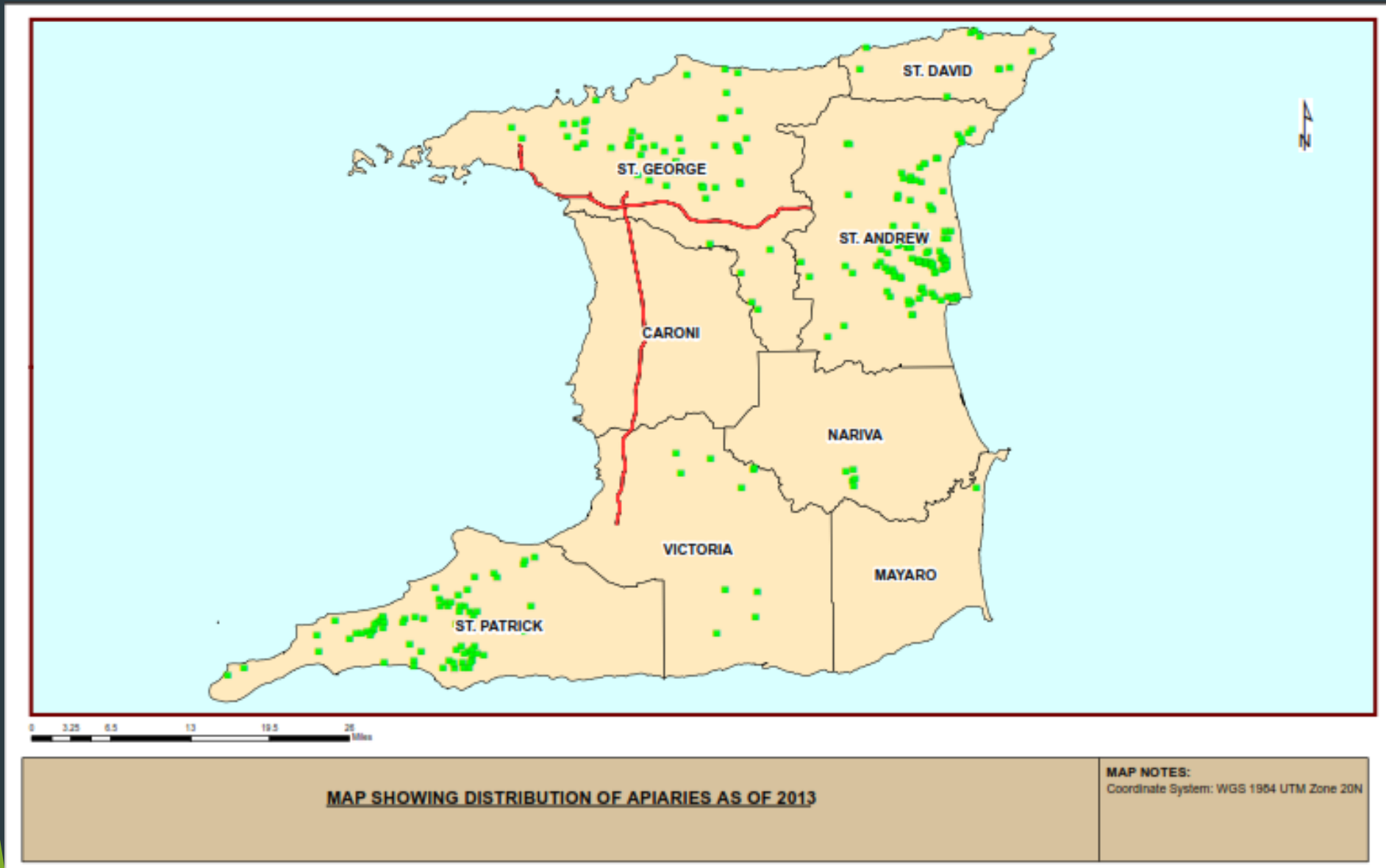
Enacted in 1935 and updated in 1980

Inspector of Apiaries carries out the mandate of the Act

## Size of the sector

- ▶ Approximately 400 registered beekeepers.
- ▶ Approx. 8000 colonies.
- ▶ Several unregistered beekeepers with multiple sites and several 100's of colonies.
- ▶ 4-6 gals of honey/colony

# Apiary Distribution - Trinidad (2013)



# Organisations

- ▶ TTBA      Trinidad and Tobago Beekeepers Association
- ▶ ATTAC    All Trinidad and Tobago Apiculture Co-operative
- ▶ AOPB    Association of Professional Beekeepers
- ▶ TAS      Tobago Apicultural Society



# Level of Government Support

Official Policy Framework of GORTT

Create a

*Strong, modern , prosperous and competitive  
agriculture sector*

*To improve the nation's food security and  
reduce poverty*

## Beekeeping fit's into this framework

- ▶ 50% AIP for beekeepers with registered apiaries
- ▶ Bee abatement service to the public-free of charge
- ▶ Maintenance of 2 demonstration apiaries for training and provision of starter colonies to further develop the industry
- ▶ Training in Beekeeping--1 wk practical skill's course - should continue to be provided by the Extension Division
- ▶ Beekeeping officers are available for technical guidance in colony and apiary management

## Pest and Disease

Over the past 10 years no clinical signs of pest and diseases were observed in colonies.

Varroa spp. -AHB has not been impacted adversely.

Tracheal mite

“Carnivorous ants” recently are of concern (changing weather patterns, removal of forest cover)

Wax moth—poor husbandry,

# Food sources for bees

List of trees/vines(common names)	Time of flowering	Major distribution
Soapvine, cashew, cypre, coffee	Dec-Feb	NW trinidad
Mango, Rubber	Feb-April	NE Trinidad
Pink Poui, Yellow Poui, Hog Plum, Olivere	March-May	Northern range
Jiggerwood	March-May	Southern areas and Central
Angeline, Chenette, Avocado,	Apr-Jun	Throughout Trinidad
Caimite Serrete Balata Mora	June-Sep	NE SE Wide distribution,

List of trees/vines(common names)	Time of flowering	Major distribution
Tonca beans,	Jul-Sept	Northern range
Tamarind	Jul-Sept	Wide distribution
Savonette (riverwood)	Jun-Jul	Areas of high moisture
Citrus	Early dry season	Wide distribution
Samaan	Mid-year	Wide distribution
Coconut and other Palms	Yr round(pollen)	Wide distribution
Several other forest species	Throughout Dry season	All forested areas
Ti-marie, kudzu, other leguminous vines	Throughout dry season	Forest and abandon estates

# Threats

- ▶ Pradial larceny
- ▶ Slash and burn
- ▶ Fogging for mosquitoes
- ▶ Finances
- ▶ Marketing
- ▶ Illegal imports
- ▶ Climate (changing weather patterns)
- ▶ p/d
- ▶ Labour
- ▶ Land tenure/access roads
- ▶ Staffing
- ▶ Policy development

# Downstream Industry

## Sustainability, Poverty alleviation:

Honey

Wax

Pollen

Propolis

Queen

Starter colonies

Apitherapy

Exhibitions

Api-tourism

manufacture of tools and equipment  
beesuits etc.



# Import and export

- ▶ Honey and beeswax other than that used in manufactured articles is prohibited
- ▶ No importation of used beekeeping equipment
- ▶ New beekeeping equipment can be imported with permit
- ▶ Beekeeping products can be exported (importing country's requirements)

Export of beeproducts -honey- to EU territories cannot be done

(Residue Monitoring Plan)

## *The way forward*

The way forward has to give consideration to the socio-economic impact and fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic.

*“good economics begins with a concern for the conditions of life under which people live”* Arthur Lewis.

NGO's to promote awareness, funding,

develop and direct strategies for advancement in the sector;

create linkages to different sectors of the administration for data collection and research

*Agriculture policy without bees is doomed to fail.*

**Bees are the 'canary in the coalmine'**

# Apiculture is Sustainable Agriculture



Questions