

## Country Report of Barbados 2018 to 2022

### Glenroy Blackman, President of the Barbados Apiculture Association

#### History of Beekeeping in Barbados

Beekeeping in Barbados dates back to 1658, when the European settlers introduced bees. The type of honeybee present on Island is the European, with no noted Africanized bee present.

#### Membership

The Barbados Apiculture Association's (BAA) membership has grown significantly over the past three years and continues to grow. In 2018/2019 membership stood at 22 consisting of two females. Presently membership stands at 87 (63 males; 24 females). Our membership numbers have exceeded our objective and it is pleasing that there is a significant number of new female members and increased interest among the youth.

Presently there are two full-time Beekeepers on Island with one registered with the BAA. 60% of the BAA's membership practice Beekeeping on a part-time basis and the other 39% are more into hobby beekeeping.

The types of hives of choice for Beekeepers at present are the Langstroth and Topbar hives with minor variations.

Production levels are ranging between 30 to 45 pounds per hive per year.

Value added hive products include canales, soaps, skin waxes, lip balms, creams and food wraps.

#### Sensitization Programs

As the membership continues to grow the need for greater work in the education and sensitization of the public about bees, has become apparent for the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Nutritional Security (MAFS) and the BAA. Barbados is not a large country with wide expanses of uninhabited land areas, therefore with the growing interest in beekeeping the National Beekeeping Sensitization Seminars were and continue to be carried out. These activities are to show the importance of bees to our daily lives, agricultural industry and environment and to help maintain the delicate balance between Beekeepers and persons in the general community.

The BAA in partnerships with the MAFS conducted three (3) national sensitization seminars; MAFS HQ in Christ Church; Gall Hill Community Centre in St. John and Queen's Park Steel Shed in the City, throughout 2019/2020, reaching a wide cross section of our society.

The National Agricultural show Agrofest hosted by the BAS plays a vital role in the BAA and MOA sensitization efforts, as this event offers the opportunity to reach thousands of persons in a single weekend.

BAA has partnered with a number of entities between 2019 and 2022, in exhibiting its booth at several exhibitions including: IICA accountability Seminar; IICA Youth Farm Program; Future Farmers for Secondary School Students; Barbados Veterinary Association Animal Awareness Day; Guidance Counselors Association of Barbados Career showcase and the Inaugural Biennial Botanical Symposium and Exhibition.

### **UNDP Global Environment Facility SGP (UNDP GEF SGP)**

The UNDP Project, as it is commonly referred to by members, officially began on October 31, 2019 with the signing of the MOU between the BAA and UNDP-GEF. A Project Advisory Committee comprising the BAA Executive and the BAS Secretariat was then established to oversee the implementation of the project. Due to the impact of Covid-19 and the resulting State of Emergency Protocols, the Committee had to revisit many of the project's earlier plans in order to function within the new virtual world.

Accomplishments of the project:

- Five demonstration sites are being established across the island - Mount Gay in St. Lucy, Walkers Reserve in St. Andrew, Foursquare in St. Philip, National Conservation Commission in St. Michael and Ministry of Agriculture Headquarters in Christ Church. Each site is being outfitted with a variety of the different types of hives, the Langstroth, Perrone and Top Bar Hives.
- Mount Gay has also been established as the Centralized Honey Processing Facility, allowing for members to be able to extract their honey in a more food safe environment.
- Development of a BAA Logo - we are able to have branded products showcasing the work of our members under a unified banner.
- Establishment of the BAA website - the website is complete and work is ongoing with the training of some BAA members and staff of the BAS to maintain the website.
- Development of a Draft National Policy and Regulatory Framework for the Apiculture Industry in Barbados. Work was conducted on this activity through focus groups, consisting of BAA members, a qualified legal team and other interested parties.
- University of Florida/IFAS online Master Beekeeper Program Apprentice level. Currently there are 20 BAA members registered in the self-paced program. The scope is to have each BAA member enrolled in smaller numbers on a yearly interval and for members to continue to the mastery Level.

- Spotlight on Bees Training - Due to the establishment of Covid-19 protocols, the training activities had to be done virtually. The first phase was for BAA Members only and was conducted over a two-month period. It was then reformatted and delivered through a number of Google Meet sessions at five participating Secondary Schools. This was a success and we are now in the process of developing the Spotlight on Bees Training for Primary Schools as well. Through this training the BAA was also able to offer an Online Certificate Training Course on October 30, 2021. Thirty-five persons were able to take part in this training exercise. The training sessions looked at areas such as:
  - i. All you need to know about bees
  - ii. Setting up and expanding an Apiary
  - iii. Honey bee nutrition and local forages
  - iv. Commercial hive products
  - v. Legal aspects of beekeeping.

### **FAO Gender Sensitive Climate Resilient Value Chain Mapping Exercise August – November 2021**

The project was conducted by MS Vermaran Extavour (FAOSLC), Value Chain expert and project coordinator and her team. Participants in this series of sessions were from the MAFS and representatives of the BAA.

The sessions looked at the present state of the honey industry along the value chain in Barbados. It sought to identify the different players along the chain, what roles they played and how gender impacts and is impacted along the chain. This project has had many spin-off benefits

### **Argentina**

In July 2019, during a visit by the President of the Pampero Beekeeping Cooperative (CAP), the BAA and CAP signed an MOU that set the framework for collaboration between the two associations on areas of mutual interest. CAP has already delivered beginner beekeeping training to BAA members and have begun guiding research on supplemental feeding and the economic threshold of the varroa mite. This project was also impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and has been on hold to date.

### **Challenges**

Challenges confronted include:

- Unpredictable weather patterns, rain, volcanic eruption.
- Land availability and location away from housing communities.

- High cost of beekeeping equipment which is mostly imported. This affects the number of persons getting involved as well as the level of growth persons can commit to.
- Wax moth presence in some colonies.
- The fast development of housing has impacted on the available foraging areas for bees.

### **Future Projects**

The Association plans to implement the following:

- Continuation of the sensitization program, in school and the communities.
- Development of a queen breeding and rearing program in partnership with the MAFS.
- Continue projects started before the pandemic, such as CAP, FAO and UNDP.
- Provide opportunities for training in advance beekeeping.
- Strengthen linkages with existing partnerships and create new links.
- Assist in helping willing members, become fulltime commercial Beekeepers.