CHALLENGES OF BEEKEEPING AND HONEY TRADE AMONG SMALLER BEEKEEPERS SMES IN UGANDA.

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Beekeeping background

80% of Ugandan beekeepers, have traditional beekeeping knowledge of more than 6 years, as result; they remain operating on diminutive scale. A lot of challenges in both beekeeping and honey trade are being faced by smaller beekeepers.
1. Inadequate Knowledge and skills

Smaller holder beekeepers have less knowledge about the beekeeping applications. (natural beekeeping and organic honey) and those who have got knowledge about it, they think, it is supposed to be practiced by big scale industries.
QUESTION

1. What is the difference between the term organic honey and natural beekeeping?
2. Why is that these terms are very common on our brands and apiaries.
Natural beekeeping and organic honey

- Natural beekeeping and Organic Honey production are closely related terms, which thus far have not acquired proper definitions. The later term, is based on distinct criteria for the source of nectar.

- You can be a natural beekeeper (or close to natural), but not fulfilling all the requirements for organic honey production. On the other hand, organic honey producers must apply natural beekeeping techniques, which in general are more restrictive.
Today small holder beekeepers, especially those in the commercial sector, do not apply natural beekeeping techniques that were used in the past, which has led to a large-scale weakening of bee colonies, poor quality production and contamination. For example, beekeepers use immense amounts of chemicals to fight mites and pests. In addition, they feed their colonies with syrups and other supplements.

*Natural beekeeping and organic honey*
Proper apiary location is very important, especially if you plan in the future, to certify your honey as "Organic honey".

The producer of an organic apiculture operation must not maintain colonies in an area where a significant risk of contamination by prohibited materials exist within 4 miles (6.4 kilometers) radius of the apiary,
2. Deficiency of credit facilities and funding

There are a number of reasons behind the reluctance of financial institution to provide credit to smaller holder beekeepers:

- First the documentation required to obtain a beekeeping loan from commercial banks are the same as other types of lending, it is onerous for smaller holder beekeepers, expenses and complications of the process they put in formal credits effectively are out of reach.
• The interest rates in Uganda are quite high. They range from 19 to 30% per annum. In addition, the Bank of Uganda regulations on collateral are very demanding; Collateral is categorized according to two tiers of risks, ranging from no risk to high risk. Any type of movable asset is considered to be high risk, whereas immovable assets are considered to be either low or medium risk.
• The typical loan term does not exceed four years, which restricts beekeeping investment sector

• On their side of funding, government has not put enough resources in this sector because; farmers have failed to prove to them that, the sector can generate revenue for the government
No. 3 Lack Of Unions

- Beekeepers lack unions that give them strong voices; as a result they end up selling their bee products at cheaper prices due to limited information about markets for their ready products, it is very hard for them to acquire resources from donor agencies and compete with other agricultural sectors.
N0.4 Low Capacity Production

• They produce on small quantities mainly for medicine and home consumption; this does not help the beekeepers to benefit from the market.

• As result, government can not intercede in terms of funding, because there is no attestation showing that the sector can generate revenue.
No.5. Limited Bee Inputs

- The cost of bee equipments is very tower, most beekeepers want to enlarge their beekeeping ventures, because they are still operating on small scale, they cannot afford to invest in modern beekeeping inputs. They end up producing low substandard honey.
No.06. Less Knowledge about other bee products.

- Smaller holder beekeepers have good knowledge on honey but when it comes to other bee products, they have less knowledge about it. Bees products like bee venom, bee propolis, royal jelly, bees wax, bee lip bum, are still scarce yet their demand is so high. because farmers concentrate only on honey.
No.3 Bees Products

bee wax
propolis
royal jelly
bee pollen
Low Quality Honey Imports pose a threat to Local Industry.

- Low productivity and poor quality of bee products are the major economic impediments for smaller holder beekeepers. The origin of honey is not specified, due to honey scarcity, some processors tend to brand their labels with false regions where that honey is not coming from.

- They produce low quality products that, they are forced to sell to whole sale buyers, at prices much lower than, in domestic commercial markets.
CHALLENGES OF LOCAL AND MODERN BEEKEEPING PRACTICES AMONG SMALLER HOLDER BEEKEEPERS IN UGANDA
Traditional methods challenges

Beekeeping in Africa is majorly done in local hives using traditional methods which comprises approximately 85% and other 15% of top bars and frame hives.

Despite the types of technologies, majority of beekeepers still use old beekeeping practices based on their forefather’s know how techniques and this could also explain why the yields are low coupled with poor quality of honey.
Rural people have good knowledge of bees, plants and places favored by bees but hives are usually destroyed and colonies often killed in the process of collecting honey.

Contamination and fermentation of honey is also common due less knowledge on handling honey in its purest form.

Despite the diversity of vegetation suitable for the bees in the region, beekeepers depend on collecting swarming bee stock. The current shortage is also limiting production of honey and by-products for which there is considerable potential.
• Beehives are traditionally constructed from bamboo, boruss palms or woven from forest climbers. However hives are crudely raided at night with the use of grass torches and fire to smoke out the bees leaving many colonies destroyed. Honey harvested from such hives, it comes out with a lot particles and smoke of fire and proteins from bees which makes it not to be good for export market.
Modern Beekeeping Practices Challenge

- Smaller holder beekeepers have less knowledge on modern beekeeping practices, they lack adequate and intensive research on the existing beekeeping technologies, equipments, and honey and also product utilization is also a main challenge.
• Limited access to appropriate modern beekeeping equipments due to inadequate funds.

• Another challenge facing modern beekeeping practices is underdeveloped marketing system of hive products both locally and internationally level.
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