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Evaluation of Impact of Beekeeping Extension on Farmer's Livelihood in Angacha Woreda, Kembata Tembaro Zone, Ethiopia

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Abstract

Beekeeping is a very important off-farm income source for small-scale farmers in South-Ethiopian highlands. The origin of traditional beekeeping techniques reaches deep into the history and Ethiopia is considered as the biggest exporter of natural honey in Africa. Although farm land availability is low beekeeping allows farmers to increase their income without losing farmable land because of the small footprint of the new beehives. This study focuses on the technology impact and socioeconomic situation of beekeepers in the rural areas. Three representative sub-areas were selected considering the information received in the local agriculture office. In Chino Funamura, Angacha and Mesena 92 small-scale beekeepers were questioned using a semi-structured questionnaire. Collected data were supplemented by information obtained from beekeeping experts on 6 administrative levels and by own observations. 52.2% of the respondents use traditional beekeeping techniques, while 16.3% use modern beehives and 30.4% have both of them. From the total 339 beehives 81.4% were traditional and 18.6% modern. The seasonal natural honey production was 4.9 kg per modern beehive compared to 1.9 kg per traditional hive. The mean price of 1 kg of honey from a modern beehive represents \$USD 3.31, while 1 kg of honey from a traditional hive costs \$USD 3.05. According to beekeepers among the main constraints of beekeeping are animal pests, pesticides and adverse natural conditions. Soil contaminated by DDT was considered as the biggest constraint by 58.3% of the beekeepers in Chino Funamura. Insufficient training for the proper use of modern hives was observed. Although both beekeeping techniques have their limitations, it is recommended to intensify the extension of modern beehives due to its greater production potential. There is a great potential for specialised beekeeping if appropriate training on modern beehives management is provided.

Keywords: Beekeeping, honey production, modern beehive, small-scale farmers, traditional beehive