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“Global food security and food safety:
The role of universities”

Towards Organic: the Role of University Companies in Conversion to Organic Honey Production

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Abstract

This article reports how beekeepers with contributions from a charity and a university company form a platform to convert to organic in the Saral region of Iran's Kurdistan. In this platform, stakeholders e.g. Abrar charity and a faculty member of the university held, a meeting with the villagers in the region of Saral, in which the most important topics were discussed and listed. In this regard, job creation based on local resources and potentials has been considered the key issues. As such, the development of beekeeping was considered one of the options for job creation. The result of discussion at meeting revealed that the Saral villages have a good potential for the development of organic beekeeping due to the first class rangeland cover. In the same vein, a number of young people with facilitation of faculty members participated in the exhibition of organic products in Tehran-Iran to become familiar with organic products. According to the displayed interest from one of the young participants in the exhibition, he was encouraged to participate in organic beekeeping workshop that has been organised by Iranian organic association. In this workshop, he became familiar with the process of organic honey production. Then, with the technical and administrative support from the academic company (Roja Tadbir Payadar at Shahid Beheshti University), a field inspection was organised by the Pars-Gavah inspection and certification cooperation. Following, through a multi-stage procedure, beekeeping farm obtained the organic certificate for three types of honey. The company of Roja University then helped organic honey supply in eight organic stores as well as the organic exhibition of the Iran, welcomed by consumers and visitors. The experiences of this platform indicated that higher education institutions and their companies can help producers and improve food safety and quality.

Keywords: Beekeeping, Food security, organic honey, Platform, University Company