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The Role of Women in Beekeeping Activities and the Contribution of Bee-wax and Honey Production for Livelihood Improvement

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Abstract

The study was conducted in Arsi Negelle District of Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia, to assess the role of women in beekeeping activities and the contribution of honey production for household livelihood improvement. Using a purposive sampling technique, 90 households were included in the survey. A combination of RRA tools (key informant interview, in-depth semi-structured interview, group discussion and observation) were employed to collect primary data from beekeepers and peasant associations. The result revealed that the main purpose of keeping honey bees was for both income generation and household consumption. The number of beehives/colony owned by the bee-keepers in traditional, transitional and modern beehives was 81.7 %, 12.3 % and 6.01 %, respectively. This indicated that the majority of the farmers in the study area depends on traditional methods of honey production systems. The average honey yield per year/colony was 6.09 ± 0.35 , 12.7 ± 0.62 and 19.7 ± 0.67 kg for traditional, transitional and modern beehives, respectively. Even though women participation in beekeeping activities was low (34.6 %) as compared to men (65.4 %), it was promising. Absconding, pesticides and herbicides application, honey-bee pests (ants, wax moth (*Galleria mellonena*), lizard), high cost of modern beehives, shortage of improved bee forage, lack of beekeeping equipment, dependence on a traditional production system and lack of credit access were the main constraints in beekeeping development in the area. Among the beekeeping constraints and/or threats in the study area absconding, pesticides and herbicides application and shortage of bee forage during the dry seasons were the most pertinent factors accounting for 19 %, 11 % and 9 % of the sample respondents, respectively.

Keywords: Beehives, extension, gender, honey-bee, livelihood