

Organic Beekeeping, the experience of Cooperativas Sin Fronteras

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Sin Fronteras
cooperativas

What is CSF?

- A non profit international organization of producer organizations and stakeholders from different countries, which promotes management, growth and integration of cooperatives or farmer associations.
- All the cooperatives work guided by the principles of fairtrade, quality and organic production as defined by FLO, Slow Food and Ifoam and Agro-Ecology.
- It is a strategic alliance between producers in the North and the South.

Why an international cooperative?

- Producers are not prepared for trading in a globalized economy.
- The role of producers is delivering commodities: raw materials, anonymous, uniformed production, low price
- difficult access to the international markets for small producers;

- Trade works without borders (globalisation)
- Few companies control the world trade
- They dictate the market conditions
- Bio-diversity is the enemy of the profit

Goals of CSF

- To promote the cooperative system and strengthen cooperatives.
- To serve as bridge for shorten the food chain and close the gap between production and consumption.
- To promote local and international markets with as much added value at the source as possible.
- To establish relationships and alliances to add power to this development strategy.

Members of CSF

- At present: 18 cooperatives and producer associations from 11 countries: Italy, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Panama, Guatemala, El Salvador, Brazil, Peru and Argentina, France and Canada.
- More than 12.000 families.
- And 3 stakeholder organizations: one finance cooperative and 2 NGO's.

Particular members

- ETHIQUABLE, France
- LA SIEMBRA, Canada
- CONAPI and ALCE NERO, Italy
- PLACIDO RIZZOTTO, Libera Terra, Italy

Honey



Honey within CSF

- 5 of the member cooperatives are beekeeper organizations.
- Argentina (2), Nicaragua, Guatemala and Italy.
- Only Italy and 1 latin-american cooperative produces organic honey
- 4 Latin American organizations are fairtrade certified.
- CSF supports a honey project sponsored by COOP Italy in Nicaragua, Brazil and Bolivia.
- Honey is the only non-organic product in CSF

CONAPI

*Consorzio di Apicoltori ed agricoltori-
biologici italiani*



CONAPI

- In total 1.300 beekeepers from all the regions of Italy.
- 7 cooperatives and 3 associations of beekeepers + 230 beekeepers.
- 2.100 t, 45% organic
- Imports about 600 t, about 100 t from our members.

The Latin American coops

- They have 500 members and a production of about 1,200 t
- The honey is polifloral.
- Almost the whole production is exported,
- They are small producers: in average each beekeeper produces less than 1 t honey
- Professional beekeepers are the minority.

The organic honey in our Latin-American cooperatives

- Few production: Only one member has organic certified honey: Norte Grande (Argentina).
- The other members don't comply with the one or other requirement.
- Nevertheless, they don't use any chemical against disease.

Why not producing organic honey?

- Different reasons:
- 1- the area of feeding: 3 km radius (2.800 ha) around the beehives is too much. Some cooperative member are located between large plantations. If the beehives are located in remote regions, there are transport and security problems (rubbery)

Why not producing organic honey?

- 2- Feeding: if the beekeepers must feed only honey, it is too expensive, or the honey price is high or low. Only a high difference in price would be a better way of working.
- 3- Less incentive from fairtrade: the price difference between conventional honey was no more than 5% (no economical incentive)

What are we doing?

- CSF follows a new policy, trying to:
- A) find other beekeepers with more potential for organic beekeeping. We are training producers in organic beekeeping, support in certifying.
- B) combine organic production with organic beekeeping for getting better production and reducing risks of depending on one product.

COOP Project

A) beekeepers with more potential for organic beekeeping:

- Brazil: new organizations: COOPIVAJE and Grande Sertao in Minas Gerais; APISMEL in Rio Grande do Nord.
- Support in organic beekeeping, certifications.

COOP Project

- B) Product diversification: beekeeping combined with organic coffee in Prodecoop, Nicaragua.
- Prodecoop: one of the largest quality coffee cooperatives, special coffee, over 2.000 members. No experience in honey.
 - Introduced honey 2009. Until now, almost 1.000 beehives.
 - Interesting provisional first results in better coffee quality, principally in productivity.

Honey in Nicaragua



Constraints in Prodecoop

- . Lack of capital for increasing beehives
- . Lack of experience means: more training, more technical support with no money. The process is going slowly on.
- . Lack of capital for the infrastructure, specially for matching the European requirements.

Other producers in the Project

- . The main goal of the organizations in Brazil is to approach the local, national market.

Main market: the institutional providing honey to schools following the state program Cero Hunger.

Honey and cashew



Product for the kids in Brazil



Muchas gracias