

Present economical situation of beekeepers in Poland

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There are 39 000 beekeepers who own 1 092 000 bee colonies in Poland (data from 2007). Honey production in 2008 was about 18 - 19 thousand tonnes and it was 10% higher in comparison with the year 2007, but 30% lower in comparison with the year 2006. Reduced production of honey was caused by high colony losses. According to the estimation of beekeeping associations, during the 2007/2008 season the total colony losses in Poland were about 30%. Average production per 1 bee colony was 16.5 kg honey in 2008. Prices of honey in wholesale market were very low and different and depended on varieties of honey. For example 1kg of : rape honey – 1.6 – 1.8 EUR*; multilforal honey – 1.7 – 2.1 EUR; lime, buckwheat, black locust honey – 2.6 EUR; heather honey – 5.7 EUR, honeydew honey – 3.5 EUR.

Selling of honey on wholesale market allowed to cover the costs of production only, but there weren't profits for the producers. In the small apiaries costs of production were about 57 EUR per 1 bee colony but in professional bee farms were higher – 72 EUR.

Last years for the Polish foreign trade of honey, were characterized by minus balance. Honey imports to its exports were much higher. During the period from January to September 2008 the volume of honey exports to the EU and third countries were amount 323 tonnes of honey only, the volume of imports were amount 2576 tonnes. The value of the balance in foreign trade during this period was minus 3647 thousand EUR.

In the 2007/2008, Polish beekeepers for the fourth time were benefits of National Programs of Assistance to Support the Development of Beekeeping, shaping the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union. The program reimbursed costs incurred in: technical assistance, varroasis control, rationalisation of transhumance, analyses of honey and applied research. The value of projects sent to the Agricultural Market Agency (paying agency) were approximately 28 millions PLN (6 000 000 EUR). This amount was much higher of available the financial measures. Finally 210 projects were accepted by (paying agency) amounting over 15.3 million PLN. Thus, the degree of used financial resources was over 90%.

*1 EUR = 3.5 PLN (for the 2008)