



Beekeeping in Afghanistan

What bees are important in Afghanistan?

Afghanistan has a long tradition of honey production, particularly by women. The imported European honeybee (*Apis mellifera*) and two Indigenous species (*Apis cerana* and *Apis dorsata*) are the main species of honey bees found in Afghanistan.

Apis mellifera

- Very suitable for beekeeping.
- Afghan beekeepers are actively involved in managed movement of *Apis mellifera* bees back and forth between Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- Some 30,000 colonies per year are migrated for honey production.
- Honey production averages between 20 and 50 kg per colony.

Apis cerana

- Suitable for beekeeping.
- Confined to mountain areas bordering Pakistan.

Apis dorsata

- Not suitable for beekeeping.
- Migrate naturally between Pakistan and Afghanistan, and produce important quantities of honey in the Jalalabad area, much of which is collected by honey hunters.
- Honey production is up to 8 kg of honey per colony.

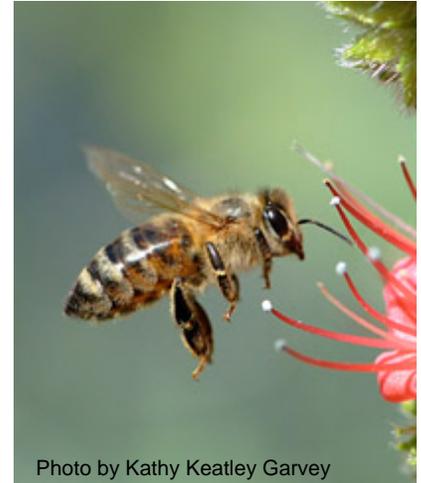


Photo by Kathy Keatley Garvey

Challenges for the Afghan Honey Industry

There is a high demand for honey in Afghanistan, especially in Badakhshan and in northern Afghanistan.

Processing. The main problems facing local honey processing include 1) access to storage facilities, and 2) processing machinery and containers to produce affordable high quality products. For example, local honey processors often use plastic jars which reduce both quality and product image.

Although a lot of honey is locally produced, the lack of local processing capacity means the bulk of the raw honey produced in Afghanistan is exported to Pakistan, where it is processed and then (re-)imported back to Afghanistan at a higher cost.

Diseases. The most common diseases found in Afghanistan Bees are:

- Varroa and Tropilaelaps mites
- American foulbrood (AFB) and European foulbrood (EFB)
- Wax moth
- Acarine

Beekeeping Groups

- Paktia Beekeeping Association
- In Takhar, beekeeping cooperatives are in the districts of Shohada, Baharak , Jerm, Wordoge, Khash, and Rustaq
- Nangarhar Beekeepers' Association

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References: "Beekeeping for people living in countries under stress: Afghanistan and Iraq" by Dr Nicola Bradbear Bees for Development UK; Bees for Development Journal 71, 2004; USAID <http://reliefweb.int/node/458832>; "Marketing Research on Volume of Jams/ Sauces/ Pickles in Kabul- Afghanistan" by Glory Marketing Company (G.M.C) 2008 <http://www.asmedproject.info>; "Main Investment Opportunities in Afghanistan" by Said Mubin Shah, 2009, Afghanistan Investment Support Agency Research and Policy Department <http://www.aisa.org.af>; "Honeybees, Pollination and Livelihoods" by Farooq Ahmad, Min Bdr. Gurung, Saeed Khan, Uma Partap, 2009 ICIMOD <http://books.icimod.org>

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