

Under the Perpetual Seal of Inheritance ...

The great physicist Einstein, appreciating in its true dimensions the importance of bees, used to say: "If bees were to disappear from the face of the earth, man would only have four years to live. The more the pollination, the more the grass, the more the animals, the more the people". He knew what he knew; among the knowledgeable there we were also, the Romanians. Merely as a tourist, one cannot help noticing names on street signs: Stupina, Stiubeeni, Prisaca, Prisaceni, names that take one in thought to the best in this world, honey. And our inheritance perpetuates its duration under the sign of the same seal: the bee.

Those who practice beekeeping in Romania, at present over 100,000 people, belong to all social categories. It is an extremely heterogenous mass of people, each member having a different number of bee colonies. Those with the lowest number of bee colonies, and these are the most of them, love bees and fill their time in the nicest way possible. The joy of obtaining a honeycomb is extreme. Our beekeepers are practitioners, therefore this is a job, but to them it is more than a job, the joy of getting close to the bees and of knowing them is beyond comparison.

Beekeeping becomes, or has already become, an agricultural job for the masters of hives, for those who plan to live exclusively or almost exclusively on practicing beekeeping. The extremely important social role of beekeeping in absorbing labor, through beekeeping, through the processing and diversification of agricultural products in the commercial network available. Everything derives from the nutritional, bio-energetic and medical quality of honey and its derivatives.

After the Romanian agriculture registered a significant increase in the number of bee colonies, partially forced, that in the early 1989 reached the figure of 1,418,000, under the conditions of a socialist economy, in the past few years, as result of the reorganization of economic life along principles of market economy, the state apicultural sector (forests sector and agricultural state enterprises, as well as the cooperative sector) was mostly disorganized, which determined a cancellation of many aviaries that belonged to these three economic sectors of activity. By changing the economic structures and as result of increased possibilities of to make profits according to the respective economic principles, in the private sector, also, there have been numerous cases of giving up beekeeping. In other words, a decrease in the number of bee colonies was registered in all the counties, so that in the beginning of the year 1998 (according to Romania's Annual Statistics, without census) there were only 626,000 colonies that produced 10,543 tons of honey.

The number of bee colonies, the amount of honey, the diversification of bee products, obtaining important amounts of royal jelly, pollen, propolis, apilarnil, bee venom, the equipment in the aviaries, as well as in the processing units, the results in the scientific research activity, all place Romania at present among the countries with a well developed beekeeping and with clear prospects of stimulating beekeepers and progress.

The graphic below shows the compound of research, production and education units of the Beekeepers' Association, as we presented it in short in the last issue of the magazine.

And, as August has drawn to an end, with its clear blue sky, lots of sun and little rain, and many beautiful days, let us see what a hard-working beekeeper ought to have done in his aviary. Taking into account that in this month the climate conditions are less and less favorable for raising brood, the hills area and the Danube Delta are the only ones with a vegetation still producing nectar and pollen that bees gather from the flowers growing after the hay was collected were from the spontaneous flora growing in the humid areas.

As bees that have taken part in the summer flows continue to die, the power of colonies diminishes and their preparations for winter are more intense.

Therefore, the operations that are necessary now are: removal of empty combs, uncapping combs with little honey, balancing and possibly adding honey combs and adding sugar syrup to the food reserves, replacing inadequate queens with young prolific ones, administering stimulating feeding to increase brood raising, narrowing the opening to avoid stealing from the combs, clinical examination of the bee colonies, possibly treating against varroa, European and American loca, preservation of empty beehives deposited in cupboards after smoking with sulphur, as the case reconditioning combs and lids that will host bee families in the winter.

MARTA GIOGIA