VIETNAM: BEEKEEPING DEVELOPMENT AND HONEY MARKETING

The International Conference on Beekeeping Development and Honey Marketing took place in Hanoi, Vietnam from 30 October to 2 November 2010. The excellent meeting was organised by Vietnam's Bee Research and Development Centre, Vietnam Beekeepers Association, The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, in association with Apimondia, and very well timed so that people could attend this Conference and then travel on to South Korea for the AAA meeting, reported on pages 8 and 9. Among many papers presented, Ronald Phipps from USA presented *Honey Trade in the 21st Century* discussing trends affecting the international honey market. These are some of the data he presented:

**World honey production 2000-2008**
World production of honey increased by 32% from 2000-2008 to reach 1,517,747 tonnes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Trend</th>
<th>% rise/fall</th>
<th>2008 total (tonnes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>Increase</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>166,253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americas</td>
<td>Decrease</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>325,086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>Increase</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>639,849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>Decrease</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>354,857</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2008 FAO statistics**

In 2008, Argentina China, Turkey, Ukraine and USA were the top five honey producing countries. Since then production has declined in Argentina and the USA.

**Honey consumption per capita**
We must understand the different variables that are currently influencing, and are likely to continue to contribute to an increase in both production and prices. These factors include:
- Increased global industrialisation
- Reduction in arable land
- A shift to more profitable enterprises as societies become more industrialised and urban populations increase
- Increased cost of production
- Increased vulnerability of bees
- Climatic volatility, more severe droughts
- Volatility in relative currency values, which affect the comparative advantages and disadvantages for different countries in purchasing honey
- Antidumping laws, as various countries adopt policies to protect domestic industries.

**Global honey science**
The development of international honey trade requires increased understanding of the science of honey. A global database of primary honey samples that takes into account climate, elevation, methods of blending and floral sources is essential for both scientific and legal credibility. This database can be established only by commercial laboratories. The study should involve academic and government entities and be rooted in objective science, not commercial interests. The international industry should support a study that would involve co-operation from all major honey producing countries, and take into account all relevant variables, including floral source, climatic conditions and elevation (because these affect the metabolic and photosynthetic processes) and production of honey through the interaction of botanic and zoological life.

**International honey standards**
Because of the fact that bees are vulnerable to diseases and must be protected, honey does not exist in a realm of ultra purity. We need to establish tolerance levels and testing levels, international standards and internationally accepted good beekeeping practices. Due to the increase in global trade in honey and the fact that the major consuming countries do not produce enough honey to satisfy their needs, honey trade is necessary. Issues of legality and safety are leading to demands for traceability of honey from all origins. Traceability from individual beekeepers, to honey exporters or dealers, and to honey packers, is critical for compliance with good manufacturing practices and for strong quality control to ensure purity and origin.