APITRADE AFRICA MEETS IN NAIROBI

In March 2009 the Steering Committee of ApiTrade Africa, the African honey trade network, met to review progress and further establish the organisation. Notable achievements since the last meeting in February 2007 include registration of the organisation, representation at the Apimondia Congress in Melbourne 2007 (see BfDJ 85), completion of the Constitution and the creation of a website.

Uganda Export Promotion Board (UEPB) has been hosting the Secretariat for ApiTrade Africa since December 2007 on an interim basis, and Ms Dorcas Zaizi has joined the Secretariat to help with administration. The meeting resolved future actions that included finalising the membership application process, and formally launching ApiTrade Africa, to be completed during 2008. UEPB was requested to continue to host the Secretariat and this was accepted. Another agreed action was the opening of a public discussion forum for interested stakeholders to share ideas about ApiTrade Africa. To join this forum, contact the Secretariat (at the address right) for details.

On day three of the meeting, ApiTrade Africa members heard from Traidcraft, UK, who summarised findings of a recent honey market study. The Traidcraft representative highlighted the finding that while fair-trade certified honey is in high demand in Europe, the certification process remains a significant challenge for poor producers in Africa. On a positive note, it was reported that African and Middle East markets are demanding greater volumes of honey. These markets are relatively easy to access and offer significant commercial opportunities. For a copy of this report follow the Traidcraft link on the Information Centre at Bees for Development's website.

HONEY LEGISLATION UPDATE

Between 2001 and 2005 annual honey consumption in the European Union (EU) increased by 1.5%. With consumer interest in healthy lifestyles rising, the consumption of health food is growing too. Honey fits in well with this trend. Developing countries supply almost half of EU honey imports.

The EU is an important producer of honey, with production growing by 2% annually between 2001 and 2005. A large part of this growth was realised in Eastern Europe, notably Hungary and Poland. Bulgaria and Romania also significantly increased production. Due to the accession of these countries to the EU, the self-sufficiency rate of the EU increased from 54% to 61%.

Bulk imports of honey reach consumers after being packed by packers or processed by industrial users. Pre-packed honey is also imported, but seldom from developing countries. Importers usually combine the functions of importing honey with processing, blending and packing. The EU25 imported €2.39 million worth of honey in 2005. CBI News Bulletin more information www.cbi.eu/marketinfo

In BfDJ79 (June 2006) we reported on the EU embargo against Brazilian honey. In March 2008 the Commission released an Annex to Decision 2004/432/EC on the approval of residue monitoring plans submitted by third countries. The Commission stated that Brazil had submitted a new residue monitoring plan for honey. The evaluation of that plan demonstrated that Brazil again provides sufficient guarantees on its monitoring of honey for residues. In addition, an inspection visit to Brazil has revealed that substantial progress has been made by the competent authority in implementing a comprehensive residues monitoring plan, and that Brazil now complies with EU requirements.

American Bee Journal (Vol 148 No 2, February 2008) reports that as a result, Brazil withdrew offers for the USA which had been its main market in 2007. This will have a major impact on the American honey market. Brazilian exporters predicted honey price increases of 30%, as Brazil can make more money exporting to the EU.

The list of so-called third countries — those authorised for their honey to be imported into the EU — was updated in the Annex issued on 13 March 2008. Ethiopia is now included. Countries previously included and now excluded are Belize and South Africa.

The 34 recognised countries are: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Croatia, Cuba, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, India, Israel, Jamaica, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Moldova, Montenegro, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Pitcairn, Russia, San Marino, Serbia, Switzerland, Tanzania, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, Uruguay, USA and Zambia.

More at www.eu-lex.europa.eu/EU/LexUriServ