Caribbean Congress in Grenada

Keywords: Association of Caribbean Beekeepers' Organizations, Grenada Association of Beekeepers; spice island; US Virgin Islands

The Sixth Caribbean Beekeeping Congress took place in May in Grenada. St George's University School of Veterinary Medicine kindly provided an excellent venue within the University campus. Around 100 participants from 15 nations participated in the Congress that consisted of five days of talks, presentations, social events and visits to beekeepers and enterprises throughout the island. A great chance to learn about bees and meet others who are equally involved and interested.

Bees in Grenada are generally healthy, and beekeepers enjoy good local markets for their produce. Grenada is famous as 'the spice isle', growing nutmegs, cinnamon and cloves - that local beekeepers use with their honey and beeswax to make value added products. Major problems in Grenada (and other Caribbean nations) are the growing shortage of places to keep bees as Caribbean land is used increasingly for housing and recreation, and widespread use of pesticides. The Congress was organised by the Grenada Association of Beekeepers in collaboration with the Association of Caribbean Beekeepers' Organizations (ACBO) and with support from St George's University School of Veterinary Medicine and the Government of Grenada. ACBO has played a crucial role in ensuring the continuity of these Congresses, and ACBO's AGM was held during the Congress, with new officers elected. The US Virgin Islands won the bid to host the 7th Congress, to take place in 2013.

Nicola Bradbear's travel to the Congress was kindly sponsored by VITA (Europe) Ltd

Most Caribbean honey is marketed in rum bottles (right)
Mr Jeff Augustine, President of Grenada Beekeepers Association (inset)
Beekeeping in Grenada (below)
AN INSPIRATIONAL POEM

When I say, “I am a Beekeeper”
I’m not shouting, “I know it all”
I’m whispering, “I want to learn”
“Now, I’ve found another aspect of nature to appreciate”

When I say, “I am a Beekeeper”
I don’t speak this with haughty, ill-placed pride
I’m confessing that I lack experience
And need others to be my guide

When I say, “I am a Beekeeper”
I’m not trying to be strong
I’m admitting that I make mistakes
And use YOUR confidence to right my wrong

When I say, “I am a Beekeeper”
I’m not claiming to be perfect
I too have lost many hives
But attending Bee Congresses and Trade shows keep me excitedly focused

When I say, “I am a Beekeeper”
I still feel the sting of sacrifice
I have my share of doubt and ignorant zeal
So, I call upon this ACBO Network to educate

When I say, “I AM A BEEKEEPER”
It’s not that I am richer than anyone
I’m just a simple CHAMPION of this cause
Who receives economic value for good,
EXCELLENT work done.
Socio-economic trend setters -
BEEKEEPERS

G Deslyn Richards, St Kitts & Nevis

This poem was presented at the 6th Caribbean Beekeeping Congress and was inspired by Maya Angelou’s work. For the full effect, listen to Deslyn reciting her poem at www.beesfordevelopment.org/news