

## Cameroon: Bee Farmers Brainstorm on policies to develop apiculture Friday, January 22, 2010

**By Azore Opio**

Some 40 worried bee farmers convened at the Cameroon Cultural Centre in Buea, January 18-19, to brainstorm and draft recommendations that would help in formulating a national policy on bee farming. "I believe that you can have an impact," said Rural Women Development Centre, RUWDEC, Coordinator, Beatrice Lyonga, who organised and facilitated the workshop.



**Ngwese, (standing) facilitating the workshop**

"Historically, our industry has not been well represented on national policy matters," she added, "but now the government has seen that it is important to involve actors (NGOs/CIGs) in the field as well as the farmers so that they (bee farmers) can derive benefits from the activities of the Support Programme for the Promotion and Development of Apiculture, PADFA, in the Southwest Region.

PADFA is a pilot programme initiated by the Ministry of Livestock , Fisheries and Animal Industry, started in July, 2009 in five regions; Northwest, West, Adamawa, East and Southwest, after a study revealed numerous problems plaguing the apiculture sector.

Hence, the workshop was organised to create awareness in bee-keeping farmers and other stakeholders in the bee-keeping sector. Among the problems the bee farmers are faced with are the difficulty in colonising hives, insufficient funds and equipment, inadequate marketing skills and strategies, lack of collaboration from partners due to conflicting ideas and general ignorance about the sector.

The bee farmers, therefore, resolved that a policy be enacted based on the need to train in bee-keeping and marketing of honey and other bee products like wax; the need for law(s) to

protect bees and uphold bee-keeping for eco-system conservation, enhance environment for bee, human and livestock habitation, include bee-keeping in the school curriculum, involve youths in the sector, institute a marketing structure and quality control and ensure general and regular capacity building.

The bee farmers also formed the Southwest House of Bee Farmers, SOWEBEEH, with an interim exco headed by Gilbert Dountio as President; Bridget Etchu as Vice President; Shey Thomas Fonyuy as Secretary; Abel Lyonga as Assistant Secretary; Christina Fomba as Financial Secretary; Francis Foncham as Treasurer; Chrisantus Chalefack as Social Secretary and Thomas Abe, Alice Elali and Simon Ndobbo as 1st, 2nd and 3rd Advisors respectively.

Dominic A. Ngwese, Director of Nature Cameroon NGO, was the technical facilitator, while Martha Nadege, Divisional Chief of Section of Animal and Fisheries, who represented the Divisional Delegate, opened and closed the workshop. Honey, which is a product of bee activity, possesses both nutritional and medicinal values.

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