

Organic beekeeping in Mexico

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Organic beekeeping in Mexico: Introduction (1)

- **Mexico is often described as land with high diversity of ecosystems, crops, fauna and flora.**
- **Offering excellent preconditions for organic honey production.**




Organic beekeeping in Mexico: Introduction (2)

- **Pre-hispanic cultures produced honey from the native stingless bee (Meliponini) before European honey bee was introduced it.**



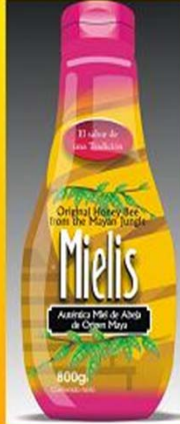
Organic beekeeping in Mexico: Introduction (3)

- The main beekeeping product in Mexico is Honey.
- Mexico ranks sixth in the world of honey production (57,000 tons) and third as an exporter (25,000 tons).



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Conditions that allows Mexico high potential for organic beekeeping (1)

- **Beekeeping with Africanized honey bees: despite the problems derived from their defensiveness, these bees have great qualities in terms of natural defences against diseases and varroa**



Conditions that allows Mexico high potential for organic beekeeping (2)

- Many states of Mexico have low industrialization and small scale agriculture with low use of pesticides
- High diversity of flowers



Actual situation of the organic beekeeping in Mexico (1)

- Mexico produces approximately 1,150 tons of organic certified honey, that is about 5% of the Mexican honey export.**
- Actually 20 operators are certified organic. Most organic producers are cooperatives with small scale beekeepers.**
- In 2010 more than 448 organic beekeepers (and 291 beekeepers in transition) are managing more than 46,318 organic hives (and 8,629 hives in transition).**

Organic Honey Production Process



Organic apiary



Organic hive



**Organic
beekeeper**



**Harvest, extraction, and filling
process**



**Container for
export**

Actual situation of the organic beekeeping in Mexico (2)

- Organic honey is mainly produced in the states of Yucatan, Campeche, Quintana Roo, Chiapas, Oaxaca, Morelos and Jalisco.



Actual situation of the organic beekeeping in Mexico (3)

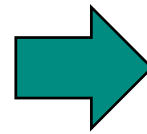
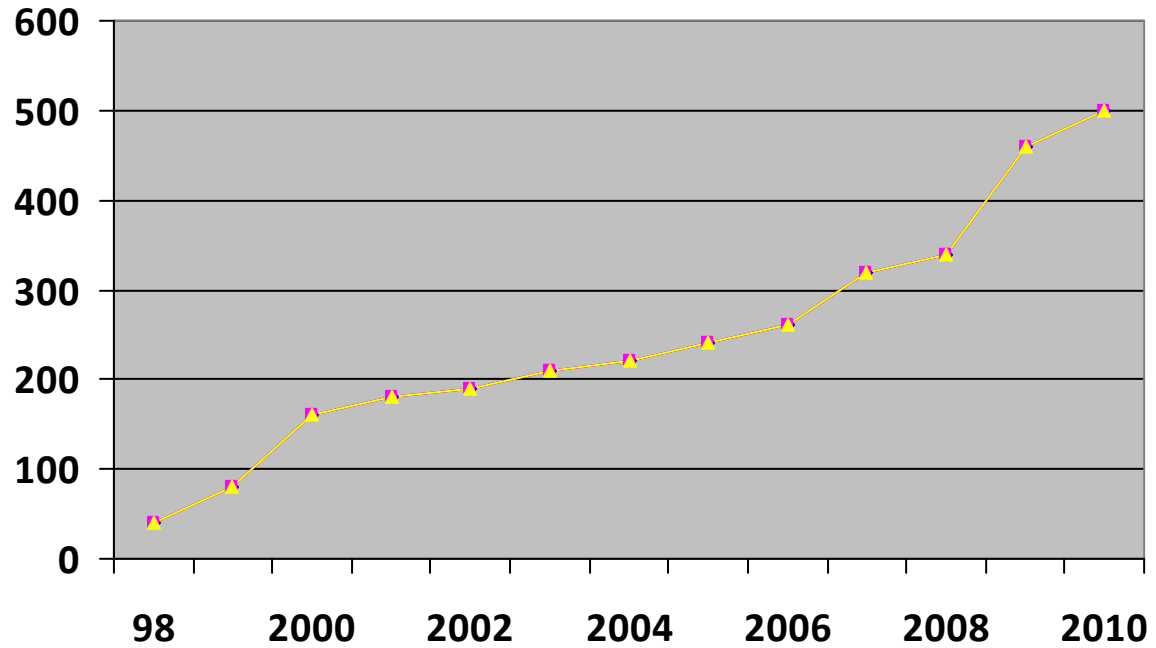
- Some of the organic beekeeping cooperatives also hold Fair Trade certificates.
- The first cooperatives were certified in the 90's in Oaxaca y Guerrero state.
- Naturland/IMO organized the first organic beekeeping workshop in 2001.



Succes of a cooperative of small beekeepers

Started producing 3 tones now produce 500 tons

It is expected to reach 1000 tones in 2013



Actual situation of the organic beekeeping in Mexico (4)

- Since 2003 “El Colegio de la Frontera Sur” (ECOSUR) has offered annual courses with diplomas in organic beekeeping.**
- Naturland/ IMO trained the inspection agency Certimex on auditing organic beekeepers in 2004.**
- The “First Forum of Organic Apiculture” was hold in 2005 in Chetumal, followed by a second forum 2008 in Mérida.**

Actual situation of the organic beekeeping in Mexico (5)

- The premium price placed on organic honey makes the transition to organic production very attractive.
- For small scale beekeepers in cooperatives, an Internal Control System (ICS) has to be developed and full traceability of the product must be ensured.



Actual situation of the organic beekeeping in Mexico (6)

- The documentation of the beekeepers activities, as well as the accounting of the honey and wax can present some difficulties at the beginning; particularly because many of the indigenous beekeepers are illiterate.



Actual situation of the organic beekeeping in Mexico (7)

- Organic certifiers like Naturland, IMO and Certimex carry out wax samples in order to ensure absence of conventional varroacides in the wax. If wax is contaminated it has to be replaced and the cycle of home-grown wax has to be established.



Conclusions

- **Mexico presents suitable conditions of biodiversity and nectar sources from extensive natural forests, traditionally not intensively developed agriculture, and more than 400,000 ha certified organic agriculture land.**
- **Mexico has the potential to increase organic honey production considerably, so that many cooperatives of small farmers may benefit by including organic beekeeping in their production.**

Thanks for your attention!

