

The Danish Beekeepers Association

The Danish Beekeepers Association (Danmarks Biavlerforening) was founded on the 5th July 1866. The preamble stated that the aim of the organization was to work for the benefit of beekeeping and especially to introduce the beekeeping method developed by Dzierzon.

Right from the beginning much effort was put into informing the public and educating beekeepers. The Danish Bee Journal (Tidsskrift for Biavl) has been published since the very beginning of the organization. Much effort was devoted to advisory work too. Actually, the founder of the organization widely travelled as a beekeeping teacher in Denmark.

The aims of the association

Things have changed. But the Danish Beekeepers Associations have almost retained the same organization as in the early days. Although the sentence in the preamble about Dzierzons method has been taken out, the association still aim at working in the member beekeepers interests. The aim of the association is today:

- Gathering danish beekeepers in an organization
- Representing the interest of beekeeping in Denmark
- Promotion of beekeeping in Denmark

One main task of the organization is publishing the Danish Bee Journal (Tidsskrift for Biavl). The advisory service gives advice to the members and to the public on beekeeping. The association do also run a small bookshop, that sells guarantee seals for honey and books on beekeeping.

The association runs several projects, which e.g. focus on developing methods to fight the varroa mite, monitoring food quality and colony loss and projects about organic beekeeping. The Danish Beekeepers Association do also run beekeeping development projects in Africa.

The members

The Danish Beekeepers Association have 5500 members, which represents around 90 % of the Danish beekeepers. Approximately 2 % of the beekeepers are full-time professional beekeepers, 5% are part-time beekeepers and the rest are amateur beekeepers.

The members get subscription of the Danish Bee Journal, they can participate in education and conferences, they can use the advisory service and they have insurance for damages caused by the bees on other peoples properties and third part coverage.

The structure

The association is a Federation consisting of 80 local beekeepers' associations spread all over Denmark. Representatives of the local associations elects the president and six other members of the executive body.

The executive body elects the Vice-president and appoints the head of the secretariat. The secretariat has a staff of 10 employees (4 full time).

The Danish Beekeepers Association is member of The Danish Agriculture & Food Council. There is also a close links to the beekeepers of the other Nordic Countries through the Nordic Bee-Council, and membership of Apimondia.

Finances

The organization is paid and governed by the member beekeepers. The basic income is the membership fee (US-dollars 120 per year). The projects are mainly funded by the Danish government, EU and private foundations.

The bees and honey

The Danish Beekeepers' Association have no exact statistics on beekeeping, but some results from questionnaires, which shows that there are about 150.000 beecolonies in Denmark. The productivity is on average 35 kg pr. colony. The total production is around 2,500 tons of honey a year. Consumption is higher than 1 kg pr. person. That means in total 5.000 tons a year. Imports of honey total 2.500 - 3000 tons a year.

The main honeys are multi flora with some dandelion, rapeseed honey, white clover and lime tree. In the western part of Denmark is also produced honey from Calluna and Erica.

The bees was original *Apis mellifera mellifera* but imports from mainly Italy made the *A.m.ligustica* the main bee. In the recent years the Buckfast bee has been very popular and widespread.

On the island of Læsø is still very pure *A. mellifera mellifera*. The island is now a reservation for these original bees.

Revised 29 June 2015 RHS