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Discussion paper
on
European apiculture

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1. Situation of apiculture

Apiculture, of which honey is the main product, is an activity interdependent with agriculture. At world level the development of apiculture and its economic importance vary according to climate, flora, the heterogeneity of the sector, internal demand, market characteristics and other economic factors.

1.1. Situation at world level

Asia is the world's main producer region, with China as the biggest contributor. China is the world's main exporter and the European Union is the principal importer.

1.1.1. Production

According to figures published by the FAO (table 1) world honey production totalled 1 164 000 tonnes in 1992. Production rose by 20% between 1982 and 1992 (figure 1).

The European Union ranks third as a world honey producer (126 000 tonnes), following the ex-USSR (231 000 tonnes) and China (192 000 tonnes). Among the other large honey producers of the world (table 2) are the United States (95 000 tonnes), Mexico (48 000 tonnes) and Argentina (61 000 tonnes).

1.1.2. Trade

World trade accounts for 25% of total honey production in the world. Generally speaking, the percentage of production exported from each country depends not only on world demand but also on factors such as domestic demand, honey quality, the characteristics of demand on external markets, the need for foreign exchange in the exporting countries and the world monetary situation.

1.1.2.a. Exports

World exports of honey totalled almost 300 000 tonnes in 1992 (table 3a). China exported 48% of its honey production, representing 32% of total world trade (table 3a).

The main markets for Chinese natural honey exports are, in order of importance, Japan, the United States and the European Union (table 3b).

The Community market receives 27% of all Chinese exports, the German and British markets absorbing most of them.

The other main exporters are Argentina and Mexico, which each export most of their production (respectively 90% and 75% in 1992).

1.1.2.b. Imports

World imports have increased steadily since the end of the seventies (figure 3). The main reasons for the growth are as follows:

- increased demand for natural products and health foods
- more dynamic marketing policies of certain packers and distributors for introducing special honeys or for expanding consumer demand by cutting prices, usually involving the sale of blended honeys
- improved living standards and changing eating habits in certain countries, transforming traditional exporters into importers
- increased demand for honey for industrial use in certain countries.

Between 1982 and 1992 world imports rose by 20%. The world's biggest import market is the European Union, which accounts for 48%. Germany (86 000 tonnes) and the United Kingdom (22 000 tonnes) accounted for 75% of the total quantity imported into the European Union in 1992 (table 8).

The other large honey import markets are the United States and Japan, which represented 17% and 11% respectively of all world imports in 1992.

1.2. Situation in the European Union

The structure of the European beekeeping industry is heterogeneous in terms of production and marketing. The figures provide some indication of the present situation, which is marked in particular by high production costs, competition from the world market and damage resulting from disease.

1.2.1. Supply balance

The European Union has always produced too little honey for its needs, generally importing more than half the volume of domestic consumption. The self-supply rate rose above 50% for the first time in 1989/90.

According to estimates sent to the Commission by the Member States, the three leading honey producers in the European Union are France, Germany and Spain, with output figures of 36 000, 25 000 and 25 000 tonnes respectively in 1991/92 (table 5). Honey production in the Union rose by 49% between 1986/87 and 1991/92.

However, the supply balance must be treated with caution, as an approximation, because the production figures are estimates partly based on the increased output due to the expansion of rape and sunflower production and partly affected by improved statistical methods.

At the same time, imports of honey fell by 7% over the same period. Argentina became the main exporter to the Union, contributing 27% of all Community imports of honey in 1992, while Mexico moved to second place with 21% and China to third place with 17% (table 8) (figure 4).

Community exports to third countries amount to about 10 000 tonnes, representing only 4% of apparent human consumption in 1992 (table 10).

The volume of intra-Community trade in honey amounted to 25 000 tonnes, or 10% of human consumption, in 1992.

- Consumption

Average honey consumption in the Community remained stable between 1987 and 1992. It is estimated at a total of about 250 000 tonnes, or 700 grams per inhabitant per year. In 1992 the Member States with the highest per capita honey consumption figures were Germany with 1.3 kg and Greece with 1.6 kg (table 5).

The high level of honey consumption in Germany may be explained by the level of investment by honey distributors and packers in sales promotion and publicity. Both the major packing companies and smaller firms conduct regular promotional campaigns.

In addition, the German beekeepers' association (Deutscher Imker Bund - DIB) has encouraged consumption of nationally-produced honey with publicity campaigns and strict monitoring of the conditions of production by its members. For instance, a beekeeper guaranteeing conditions of quality production can market his products under a prestige label.

Greece is the other high consumer of honey in the Community, partly because of certain eating traditions (fasting during the Orthodox pre-Easter period).

1.2.2. Structure of production

1.2.2.a. Global figures

According to the data provided by the Member States and producers' organizations the total number of beekeepers in the European Union is 435 000, of whom 13 000 are commercial[1].

1 According to COPA (Comité des Organisations Professionnelles Agricoles de la U.E.) and COGECA (Comité de la Coopération Agricole de l'UE) a beekeeper is classed as commercial if he has not less than 150 hives.

Commercial beekeepers operate with more than three million hives, representing 42% of all the hives in the Community (table 6). According to the same data, five Member States account for more than one million hives, Spain having the highest number of all.

As regards the number of commercial beekeepers in relation to the total number of beekeepers by Member State, the figures show the highest ratios in Spain (22%) and Greece (13%). By contrast the lowest ratios are found in Germany (0.4%), Italy (1.3%), Portugal (2%) and France (3%).

The average size of a commercial bee farm differs considerably, ranging from 272 hives in Spain, through 257 hives in Greece to 176 hives in France.

Commercial beekeepers are concentrated in three Member States, with Spain accounting for 34% of the total number, France 23% and Greece 23%.

These data must also be interpreted with caution, as an approximation, because of the fact that possible links between commercial beefarming and other economic activities in the farming sector are not taken into consideration.

1.2.2.b. Production by type of honey

Generally speaking, two thirds of all honey produced is multifloral, and one third monofloral (various types). But, according to the views of the Member States and beekeepers' associations, production should in some cases be differentiated by botanical variety. For instance, in Greece 60% of honey is produced from fir or thyme, in Portugal 50% is derived from lavender. In Spain and France, honey production may be broken down in accordance with the general rule if honey from rape and sunflower is included in the multifloral category (table 7).

In Germany and Greece, the fact that a high percentage of honey production is differentiated according to botanical source and that consumption figures are higher than elsewhere may be seen as a positive outcome of the tendency of consumers to identify the botanical origin of honey as a consequence of promotional campaigns or traditional eating preferences.

1.2.2.c. Production costs

A survey of production costs and income for a standard bee farm of 200 hives has been carried out with the assistance of the beekeepers' associations. The breakdown of costs makes a distinction between variable costs, overheads and costs linked to depreciation, in accordance with the guidelines of the Farm Accountancy Data Network (FADN).

Provisional results from the survey show that variable costs are covered by sales earnings (honey) in all Member States. But positive margins are significant only in Denmark and Italy. Full analysis of the sector requires more detailed data on the structure of sales and prices, marketing costs, secondary income from products other than honey, and accounting results of existing bee farms.

1.2.3. Structure of market

The honey market is influenced by the characteristics of the products offered to consumers and industry, by the marketing networks and conditions of access to markets. Competition between Community-produced honey and imported honeys has a certain impact on honey prices.

1.2.3.a. Characteristics of market

The honey market is composed of two very distinct products, table honey and industrial honey.

Table honey is used for household consumption, mainly for spreading on bread. It is also used as a sweetener in culinary preparations, drinks and home-baked cakes and pastries.

Most honey consumption falls in this category. It is estimated that 85% of all honey marketed is table honey.

The consumer's appreciation of table honey is based on origin, colour, texture and botanical variety.

A light colour and liquid texture are generally more highly esteemed by the consumer than darker colours and creamy or crystallized textures. Incorrect consumer information may lie at the root of this scale of preference in that a crystallized texture or dark colour is generally associated with a lack of freshness. Domestically-produced honey is also more highly valued than imported honeys.

As regards botanical variety, the most widely sold honey is multifloral, which is also the cheapest. Sales of honey identified by botanical variety are confined to connaisseur consumers who prefer to pay a higher price for honey presenting organoleptic or therapeutic characteristics associated with a particular botanical species.

Industrial honey is used as a sweetening agent by the food industry (baking, confectionery, cereals, beverages) and by the pharmaceuticals and cosmetics industries, and tobacco production. Despite the advent of cheaper substitutes, honey continues to be used in certain food products, both because of the particular flavour it confers on the food or because of the value added to the product by the inclusion of honey as an ingredient on the label.

The markets for industrial honey vary in size from one country to another, with a Community average of 10-15% of the total market. Italy is the Member State with the highest percentage (40%) of honey marketed for industrial use.

Table honey competes with other spreads such as jellies, jams, syrups and artificial honey. The average consumer is attracted by the lower prices of such products, without paying much heed to the specific nutritional value of natural honey.

Industrial honey competes with other substitutes such as sugar, invert sugar syrup and corn syrup. The low cost of these substitutes induces certain food manufacturers to use them, especially when flavour is not a crucial factor in the end product. However, certain food manufacturers still find it advantageous to use honey in order to include it as an ingredient on the label.

1.2.3.b. Distribution

The European honey market is represented by packers, importers and industry. A growing number of packers prefer to import some honey directly. After packing, honey reaches the consumer via the usual food distribution channels (figure 5).

Generally speaking, those playing an active role in the chain of honey distribution are as follows:

- Producer-packers: beekeepers with facilities for making and packing honey. They sell directly to the consumer or to groups of retailers. They usually belong in the small business category and do not market imported honey.

- Packer-cooperatives: groups of beekeepers which buy, make, pack and market honey, often under their own label. They sometimes buy imported honey.

- Packers: operators buying honey from beekeepers and importers. They have their own label but may also pack for other brands. They sell to the retail trade and to industry.

- Importers: operators buying honey in producer countries, dealing with all the relevant administrative aspects and delivering honey to their customers (packers or industry).

- Industry: industrial users generally buy honey from importers to avoid dealing with the financial and administrative problems attached to importation. They focus on the quality of the product. Some industrial users import directly on a sporadic basis.

At present there are no figures on distribution in all Member States, but the situation can be illustrated by a few examples.

In Germany 75% of output is sold directly by the bee farmer to the consumer or retailer. By promotional campaigns and advertising, the national beekeepers' association has created a quality image for German honey on a market largely dominated by imported honey (20% home-produced vs. 80% imported). In addition to strict quality control of members' products the association organizes honey marketing by its members in a standard presentation with a label which carries a printed control number so that the producer of any pot of honey sold on the market can be traced at any time.

In addition, both packers and retailers conduct regular promotional and publicity campaigns.

In France two thirds of honey production is sold directly by the beekeepers themselves. The biggest beekeepers' cooperatives pack mainly national honey, although some of them pack imported products. Industrial users obtain their supplies from importers, which were assigned quotas under a system of quantity restrictions applicable until early 1994 in France (see 1.2.3.d.).

In Spain 75% of production is sold directly by beekeepers. The nougat (turrón) industry accounts for most of the industrial honey consumption and obtains its supplies from importers or directly from foreign suppliers. The publicity campaign conducted by the biggest packing company between 1977 and 1984 doubled the volume of consumption in the few years of its life.

In the United Kingdom a large proportion of beekeepers sell their product directly to the consumer or to small packing firms. Imported honey passes through the hands of importers and is bought by packers which market it via the food distribution network. Industrial users obtain their supplies from importers too.

In Italy most of the table honey market is supplied by domestic production. Industry accounts for 40% of the total market, most of the honey being used for the manufacture of nougat (torrone). Nationally-produced honey is packed by cooperatives and small beekeepers.

1.2.3.c. Prices

- producer prices

In general, producer prices move in inverse proportion to the overall volume of production, a rich crop increasing market supply and tending to bring prices down.

The dissimilarity of marketing channels and the distribution sector as a whole makes price quotation very difficult and hence also the estimation of producer prices.

Prices paid to producers seem to vary substantially from one Member State to another. The main differences between prices in the European Union as gleaned from the replies to the questionnaire sent to the authorities of the Member States and to the beekeepers' associations are attributable to the following factors:
- dissimilarity of distribution and marketing chains
- dispersion of supply
- lack of correctly defined criteria for obtaining reliable statistics.

In the past few years competition between domestic honey and imported honey has sharpened. Some neutral types of honey, easily blendable and imported at low cost, may influence national producer prices, especially in the case of multifloral honey.

- import prices

Import prices depend on the category of honey, the market of destination and the economic situation of the exporting country. Demand for honey on each market depends directly on the standard of living of the population, the economic circumstances of the population in general and local eating habits. Exporting countries may apply a policy of low cost honey supply according to their need for strong currency revenue.

The monetary fluctuations of the dollar and German mark, the growing internationalization of trade, tariff and non-tariff barriers and the world economic situation are all factors which influence the dynamics of world trade in honey.

Over the medium term the price of imported honey in the European Union has risen steadily, with an overall growth rate of 12% since 1988. The corresponding figure for Germany is 15%, for France 13% and for the United Kingdom about 11%. Import prices in the UK tend to be lower than the Community average (table 9).

1.2.3.d. Access to the market

The common customs tariff applicable in the European Union is 27% ad valorem. A reduced rate (-25%) is applied under the Generalized System of Preferences. Products originating in ACP countries signatory to the Lomé Convention and the least advanced developing countries have free access to the Community market.

Signature of the GATT Agreement carries the obligation to open the market by a reduction in the customs tariff. The 36% cut in the tariff must be implemented progressively (6% annually) over a period of six years to arrive at a final tariff of 17.3% ad valorem by the year 2000.

Until the first quarter of 1994 it was possible for Spain and France to apply quantitative restrictions to honey imports. This option has now been withdrawn since the replacement of Council Regulation (EEC) No 288/82 by Regulation (EC) No 519/94[2]. Although the quantitative restrictions are no longer applicable, the new Regulation offers a safeguard clause enabling producers to be protected against serious damage resulting from competitive products from third countries.

Furthermore, for imported honeys to be marketed in Community territory they must comply with the definitions and standards laid down in Council Directive 74/409/EEC on the harmonization of the laws of the Member States relating to honey[3].

This Directive must be revised by the Commission in the context of the rationalization and simplification of the Community rules required pursuant to the conclusions of the Edinburgh Council.

But further thought should be given to the future tenor of the provisions of the Directive, particularly from the point of view of marketing standards.

2. Support measures for apiculture

Since the early days of the Common Agricultural Policy the European institutions have provided financial support from the Community budget for the beekeeping industry. Support measures have evolved with time, and certain specific aids are applied at present.

2.1. Measures taken in the past

Community support has evolved from the system of aid for the purchase of sugar in the seventies to the systems of aid per hive and aid for the control of bee diseases in the eighties.

2 OJ L 67, 10.3.1994, p. 77.
3 OJ L 221, 12.8.1974, p. 10.

2.1.1. Aid for purchase of sugar

In 1968 the Council adopted a system of aid for the purchase of denatured sugar for winter feeding. Denatured sugar could be made from stocks of bought-in sugar. The very high price of sugar on the world market during the period 1974-76 made the system unworkable. It was abolished in 1980 and replaced by direct aid for the purchase of sugar by beekeepers' associations.

At the end of the seventies, Community beekeeping went through a period of low yields, with honey production below average on account of bad weather. Given these circumstances and the reform of the common organization of the market in sugar in 1980 the Council did not think it expedient suddenly to discontinue all Community aid to the beekeeping industry.

2.1.2. Aid by number of hives

In 1981 the Council adopted Regulation (EEC) No 1196/81 establishing a system of aid for beekeeping during the marketing years 1981/82, 1982/83 and 1983/84[4]. The basic purpose of the system was to support beekeepers over a period of time sufficiently long to encourage the start of a process of long-term improvement and development of the sector. The direct aid was intended to compensate in the short term for the rise in sugar prices and unfavourable weather, while encouraging in the long term the implementation of programmes to improve and expand the sector.
The aid was granted to beekeepers' associations in both cases.

Beneficiaries were free to use the aid as they chose; the Council did not intervene to limit purchases of sugar and encourage more emphasis on development programmes. France was the only country which devoted more than 50% of the aid to development measures. Programmes of improvement were implemented with the collaboration of the beekeepers' associations, the Institut technique d'Apiculture and the appropriate authorities. The measures formed part of a common programme covering training, research, marketing and disease prevention. The French approach can therefore be regarded as a good example of the way the aid was used to achieve the objective of long-term improvement.

The Commission's report to the Council on the system of aid for beekeeping concluded that it was inadvisable, for economic reasons, to continue the system. It was proving costly because of the structure of the industry, comprising a large number of widely scattered eligible holdings, mostly farmed on a part-time basis.

4 OJ L 122, 6.5.1981, p. 1.

However, the report advocated aid for the industry in the form of specific measures such as research into bee diseases and agricultural structure policy measures.

2.1.3. Financing of varroasis control

Varroasis is the parasitic disease with the highest incidence in the beekeeping industry in the European Union. It is caused by the mite Varroa jacobsoni. Since the first cases were reported in Europe (Greece 1975) the disease has spread very rapidly and caused notable losses in the Community bee population. Classic eradication treatments used from the start have included destruction of hives by fire, standstill orders and the application of anti-pest chemicals.

On the initiative of the European Parliament, the beekeepers' associations recognized as representative by the Commission received aid for varroasis control in 1986, 1987 and 1989.

This financial measure was coordinated by a special working group comprising beekeepers' representatives, scientists and experts.

Community financing was used for:

- information and awareness campaigns on varroasis, and the possibility of financing authorized treatments,
- surveys to determine the extent of infestation in each Member State,
- programmes of advice, training and information for beekeepers,
- a feasibility study of a joint EC-FAO programme to control varroasis in the Mediterranean basin.

Before it was abolished, the direct aid scheme provided a framework for the first ad hoc programme of research into varroasis. Research contracts were signed with 12 institutes in seven Member States for the 1983/84 marketing year.

2.1.4 Financing of research into bee diseases

This first Community research programme for the control and eradication of varroasis was pursued under the 1984-89 agricultural research programme. The priority objectives were to establish a method of early diagnosis, to improve methods of application of treatments in conjunction with plant health products, to evaluate the effectiveness of known substances and new compounds in relation to their impact in various environmental contexts, the residue levels remaining in bee products and the possible influence of secondary infections in the development of the disease.

Eight research projects were selected for funding under the varroasis programme, for which ECU 365 000 was allocated.

The Commission recently financed two technical seminars on varroasis in the United Kingdom and Belgium (1992 and 1993).

At present, under the current food and agriculture research programme, a project has been submitted on the subject of varroasis-resistant bee breeding and farming. Four Community institutes would collaborate on the project. Two indirect objectives of the research would be to dispense with chemical treatments and thereby overcome the problem of residues in bee products.

Any advancement of knowledge in these fields will inevitably have positive economic spinoff for beekeepers.

2.2. Current measures

Certain measures are currently in force in the context of general structural policy measures, quality protection and specific schemes.

2.2.1. Structural measures

Among the various measures adopted by the Council there are several which are likely to have a favourable impact on honey production and marketing.

2.2.1.a. Structural adjustment

In the context of Objective 5(a) structural measures beekeepers may apply for aid under the following Community regimes:

1. Aid for investment in agricultural holdings (Title IV, Articles 5 to 9, of Regulation (EEC) No 2328/91[5])

Aid is granted for investment related to the implementation of a "material improvement plan" (MIP). Article 11 of the same Regulation provides that young farmers are eligible for additional investment aid under the scheme.

The value of the aid as a percentage of the total investment can be as much as 45% in less-favoured areas for fixed asset investment and 30% for other types; in other areas it amounts to 35% for fixed asset investment and 20% for other types.

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5 OJ L218, 6.8.1991, p. 1, as amended by Regulation (EC) No 3669/93 (OJ L 338, 31.12.1993, p. 26).

Average investment per MIP totalled ECU 62 000 in 1991 in the Community, for a total number of 39 000 MIP approved for that year.

2. Aid for mountain and hill farming and farming in less-favoured areas (Articles 17 to 20 of Regulation (EEC) No 2328/91)

The purpose of the scheme introduced to compensate for natural handicaps is to upgrade areas used for farming (a prior condition being that the beneficiary must farm not less than 3 ha of agricultural land, or 2 ha in certain regions). As the system does not cover animal species such as bees, aid can only be obtained for planting honey-yielding crops to be used exclusively for feeding bees (in 1991 the average compensatory allowance in the Community was in ECU 63/ha).

3. Aid for vocational training (Article 28 of Regulation (EEC) No 2328/91)

This aid scheme is intended to raise the agricultural skill level of farmers receiving investment aid and young farmers.

Aid is granted for the organization or attendance of full or ancillary agricultural training courses or job training and further training.

Such expenditure is eligible for part-financing from the EAGGF Guidance Section, at a rate of ECU 8 457 per person, during his working life, with ECU 3 020 being reserved for courses relating to the environment, forestry and diversification.

4. Start-up aid for producers' organizations (Regulation (EEC) No 1360/78[6])

The general system to encourage the start-up of producers' organizations and associations was set up with the object of overcoming structural weaknesses in the supply and marketing of certain agricultural products.

The general system includes honey in Greece, Spain, Italy and Portugal.

Start-up aid is intended to cover the effective costs of the setting-up and administrative operation of producers' groups. The aid may be paid, on a degressive basis, during the first five years of operation of the group. It is equal to 5%, 5%, 4%, 3% and 2% of the value of production marketed, but must not exceed the effective costs as mentioned.

For the honey industry, there are 49 approved producers' organizations in the Community (two in Spain, one in Greece and 46 in Italy).

6 OJ L166, 23.6.1978, p. 1, as amended by Regulation (EEC) No 764/93, OJ L 77, 31.3.1993, p. 14.

5. Aid for the processing and marketing of agricultural products (Regulation (EEC) No 866/90[7])

Under this aid system, Greece received almost ECU 0.5m from the EAGGF in 1992-93 for investment projects relating to the modernization of three honey processing and packing firms.

In the same period Italy received almost ECU 0.8m for investment projects concerning the restructuring of two honey processing centres and the setting-up of three new honey storage and processing centres.

6. Aid to encourage agricultural production methods compatible with the requirements of environmental protection and maintenance of the countryside (Regulation (EEC) No 2078/92[8]).

This system of agri-environmental aid is implemented in the framework of multiannual zonal programmes.

Programmes may include commitments pursuant to Article 2 of the said Regulation, of which the following could concern the beekeeping industry:
- extensification of crop production or maintenance of extensive methods already in practice (Article 2(b))
- use of alternative production methods favourable to the environment, natural resources and maintenance of the countryside and landscape (Article 2(d)).

The maximum amount of the annual premium is ECU 250/ha, the part-financing rate being 75% in Objective 1 regions and 50% in other regions. The financial contribution is charged to the EAGGF Guarantee Section.

2.2.1.b. Regional measures

To supplement the measures applicable across all the Member States, a number of specific measures have been implemented in Objective 1 and Objective 5(b) regions. Such measures are generally designed to develop apiculture by means of a sectoral approach at regional or local level. This geographical level is well suited to the situation of apiculture, which varies markedly according to the location and can therefore benefit from territorial development measures as well as measures applicable throughout the Community.

The measures implemented under Objective 1 and 5(b) programmes fall under the heading of agricultural diversification and are very varied:

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7 OJ L 91, 6.4.1990, p. 1, as amended by Regulation (EC) No 3669/93.
8 OJ L 215, 30.7.1992, p. 85.

- studies on the possibilities of developing apiculture at local or regional level,
- genetic improvement of local breeds, for example by creating improvement centres or centres for artificial insemination with improved seed,
- increasing and improving production capacity, support for suitable forms of production (mobile hives),
- training and organization of producers,
- development of use in confectionery (honey, honey-based products with other ingredients) and industry (cosmetics, for example),
- development of labels and quality marks,
- marketing promotion aimed at distribution networks identified as bringing high returns (dietary products, para-medicinal products)

Apiculture is also being developed through other measures concerning rural development, such as:

- the creation of honey museums, to serve not only as tourist attractions but also as training centres and providers of technical assistance for beekeepers,
- inclusion of apiculture among activities for farm tourism,
- creation of sale points offering a range of local foodstuffs and craft products (including honey).

Lastly, as part of the Community initiative LEADER, 25 local development groups (11 Spanish groups, 7 Italian groups, 5 Greek groups, 1 French and 1 Portuguese group) have included activities similar to those mentioned above, as part of a local development strategy, many of which are notably innovative.

2.2.2. Quality support

Since 1985 the Commission has sought to include quality as an integral policy objective of the CAP. Products covered by the policy could thus enjoy higher prices than those of mass-produced goods.

This approach is applied in the context of the policy on rural development, encouraging the production of quality goods corresponding to internal market demand, as embodied in the following policy objectives:
- diversification of production with emphasis on the maintenance of regional or specific products
- promotion of characteristics which enhance the value of products
- provision of instruments for the certification and control of product characteristics
- consumer protection and information.

In 1992 the Council adopted two regulations to implement this approach: Regulation (EEC) No 2081/92 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs[9] and Regulation (EEC) No 2082/92 on certificates of specific character for agricultural products and foodstuffs[10], both of which can apply to honey.

9 OJ No L 208, 24.7.1992, p. 1.
10 OJ No L 208, 24.7.1992, p. 9.

These new rules provide for the use of special labelling information so that consumers realize that the products comply with the relevant Community criteria.

The implementing mechanisms leave the initiative with the producers themselves, who may join voluntary systems and agree to observe certain conditions of production laid down in a specification.

Designations of origin and geographical indications in the case of beekeeping products would apply to beekeepers operating in a fixed location or practising limited transhumance in a certain region.

The system provides for a simplified and a normal registration procedure. Under the simplified procedure, some geographical indications for honey which are already protected in the Member States have been forwarded to the Commission for registration at Community level. Producers can always submit new applications for registration in accordance with the normal procedure (as in the case of honey production located in nature parks).

Certificates of specific character may be used to enhance the value of honey produced and processed by traditional methods or honey presenting compositional characteristics which distinguish it from similar products of its category. To date the Member States have transmitted no applications concerning honey, but they are always free to do so.

In this way the European Union adds Community distinction to the labelling and ensures that the marketed products concerned - including honey - meet the criteria laid down in the Community rules.

2.2.3. Specific measures

The European Union also finances two schemes which take account of the particular geographical location of certain Community territories in terms of distance from agricultural and food product supply sources and conditions of agricultural production.

In order to encourage the continuation of beekeeping as a traditional activity and source of additional income, aid has been granted for the production of honey of a specific quality under Council Regulations Nos 1601/92[11] and 2019/93[12] establishing specific measures for the Canary Islands and smaller Aegean Islands.

11 OJ L 173, 27.6.1992, p. 13.
12 OJ L 184, 27.7.1993, p. 1.

The aid amounts to ECU 20 per hive, with a maximum of 5 000 hives for the Canary Islands and ECU 7-10 per hive with maxima of 100 000 and 50 000 hives in the Aegean Islands, depending on whether the beekeeper is a member of a producers' group recognized pursuant to Regulation (EEC) No 1360/78 on producer groups and associations thereof.

3. Problems and requirements of the sector

Beekeepers currently find themselves facing considerable difficulties, among which they are calling attention to the following:

1. The absence of representative statistics on both the volume and the value of honey productions as well as market prices. Similarly, the prices paid by consumers and the prices paid to producers are not fixed using the same criteria.

2. Profitability is uncertain because the regular increase in production costs and the variation in yields per hive make it impossible for all commercial beekeepers to earn an adequate income.

3. Community apiculture is in recession because of the drop in bee numbers and the competition from honey imported from countries where production costs are lower than in the European Union.

In view of these difficulties, urgent action is called for to support European apiculture, particularly with regard to the following:

A. a Community pollination grant payable to all beekeepers, both commercial and part-time, with a view to offsetting the costs of feeding bees during the winter;

B. a grant to offset the loss of income caused by competition from imported honey;

C. creation of a specific common organization of the market for honey, with simple management mechanisms;

D. introduction of common marketing standards for honey, or amendment of Directive 74/409/EEC to take account of honey as an agricultural product rather than as a mere industrial product and in order to enhance the value of honey by introducing specific quality criteria and improving consumer information and transparency in trade.

4. Outlook and proposals

4.2. Outlook

The Commission has sent a proposal to the Council for the amendment of Regulation (EEC) No 827/68 on the common organization of the market in certain products listed in Annex II to the Treaty[13]. The proposal provides for the simplest mechanisms for a market organization, such as application of the Common Customs Tariff and removal of national quantity restrictions, a safeguard clause, application of the competition rules laid down in the Treaty and free movement within the European Union.

In practice, honey will be covered by a safeguard clause which will prevent any damage caused by imports of honey under abnormal conditions.

With regard to intra-Community trade, account will be taken of the more restrictive national standards and national programmes of support for beekeeping which might hinder free competition.

In fact, the latter point seems to be one of the strongest arguments put forward by several Member States when the proposal was examined by the Council. Some Member States currently operate various forms of regional aid schemes for beekeepers, such as pollination grants, grants for bee stock maintenance, training grants (table 11).

However, national aids can be regarded as consistent with the Treaty provisions in the case of structural measures, measures to ensure environmental protection and disease control measures.

Beekeeping is a branch of agriculture whose three main functions are to produce goods for the market, to contribute to ecological balance and to contribute to rural economic life and development.

The productive role and the positive environmental contribution are interdependent and based on the pollinating activity of the bees.

Despite the lack of representative data and comprehensive figures, the outlook appears fairly positive on the basis of the available information, which shows an upward trend for the volume of production, a stable level of imports and a slight increase in import prices, as well as stable consumption.

Preliminary estimates show varying yields from one Member State to another, but on average they seem to be fairly similar to the general situation in agriculture.

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13 OJ No C 263, 9.10.1991, p.5 (COM(91)328 final).

The salient features of the industry seem to be the diversity of conditions of production, dispersion and heterogeneity of operators at the production and marketing stages.

The cut in the customs tariff applicable since signature of the GATT Agreement could result in a more open honey market.

Moreover, at the European Council in Edinburgh, the Heads of State or Government requested a simplification of the directive actually in force on the marketing of honey (Directive 74/409/EEC).

In the past there have been various systems of support for apiculture, some direct others less so. At present there are research programmes in hand on bee diseases and some specific aid schemes for the more remote and insular Community territories.

Lastly, there is already a range of structural measures which could be used to finance the development of the beekeeping industry, both in terms of production and marketing.

4.2. Proposals

Given the situation of the beekeeping industry in the European Union as a whole and present levels of knowledge it is not appropriate to set up a specific market organization for honey. Nor is it really feasible to devise a global system of support, such as income aids.

However, apart from applying the structural instruments, it would be possible to propose a raft of measures to improve honey production and marketing in the medium term, within the context of a framework Council regulation on beekeeping. This could include the following:

1. Improvement of the conditions of production by part-financing of national programmes implemented through the beekeepers' associations with the following objectives: coordinated control of varroasis and related diseases, rationalization of transhumance, creation of networks of regional beekeeping centres and research and development institutes for improvement of honey quality and genetic improvement of bees.

2. A study, to be carried out by the Member States, of the structure of the industry, to include number of operators, output, the marketing sector and price formation.

Aside from this programme, the Commission will draw up measures allowing the commercial beekeepers to implement a quality policy, notably:

- the definition of quality specifications for the different honeys resulting from their botanical or geographical origin,
- the development of harmonized methods of analysis to permit verification of such specifications.

On all the latter points, having received the opinions delivered on this report, the Commission will submit to the Council appropriate proposals as soon as possible.

TABLES

GRAPHS

Table 1

WORLD HONEY PRODUCTION BY REGION

('000 t)

	1990	1991	1992
Africa	108	109	112
N. and Cent. America	210	222	210
S. America	78	87	79
Asia	332	334	332
Europe (= continent)	175	168	174
ex-USSR	236	240	231
Oceania	31	29	28
TOTAL	1 170	1 189	1 166

Source: FAO

Table 2

WORLD HONEY PRODUCTION BY COUNTRY

('000 t)

	1990	1991	1992	
China	147	195	192	
ex-USSR	236	240	231	
USA	90	100	95	
Mexico	66	69	48	(1)
Turkey	51	55	55	
India	51	51	51	
Argentina	57	54	61	(1)
Canada	32	32	30	
Australia	21	21	20	
Brasil	16	17	17	
Hungary	17	10	10	
Cuba	10	10	10	
EU	116	112	126	
WORLD TOTAL	1 170	1 189	1 166	

Source: FAO
(1) [illegible] Department of Agriculture

Figure 1

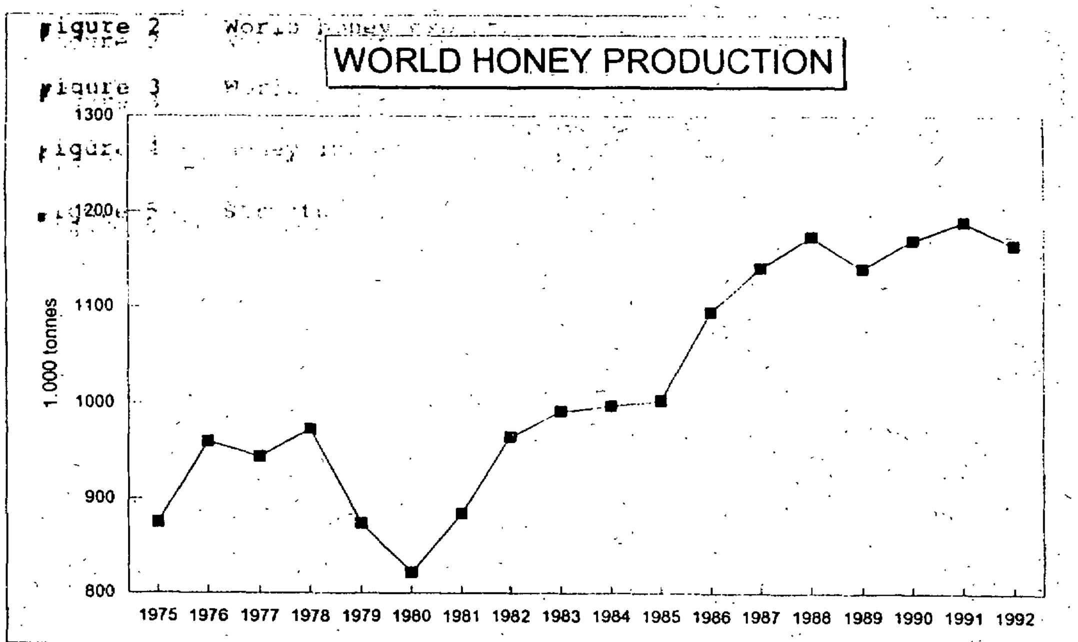

Table 3a

WORLD HONEY EXPORTS

(' 000 t)

	1990	1991	1992
China	88	70	92
Argentina	40	47	55
Mexico	44	50	36
ex-USSR	17	9	6
USA	6	5	5
Extra EU	6	8	10
Intra EU	22	18	18
WORLD TOTAL	296	280	289

Source: FAO + Comext

Fig. 2

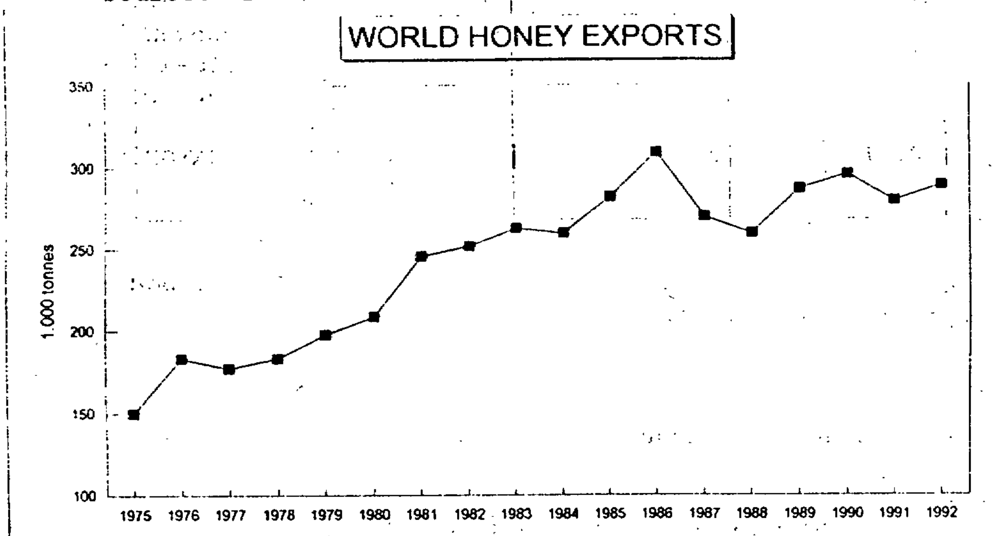

Table 3b

EXPORTS BY CHINA
BY DESTINATION

(' 000 t)

	1990	1991	1992
Japan	60	34	27
USA	12	20	25
EU	9	13	25
Other	7	3	15
TOTAL	88	70	92

Source: US Department of Agriculture

Table 4

WORLD HONEY IMPORTS

('000 t)

	1990	1991	1992
USA	35	42	52
Japan	69	39	32
China	3	2	3
ex-USSR	1	1	2
Canada	3	2	1
Extra EU	119	131	145
Intra EU	25	24	23
WORLD TOTAL	294	275	300

Source: FAO + Comext

Figure 3

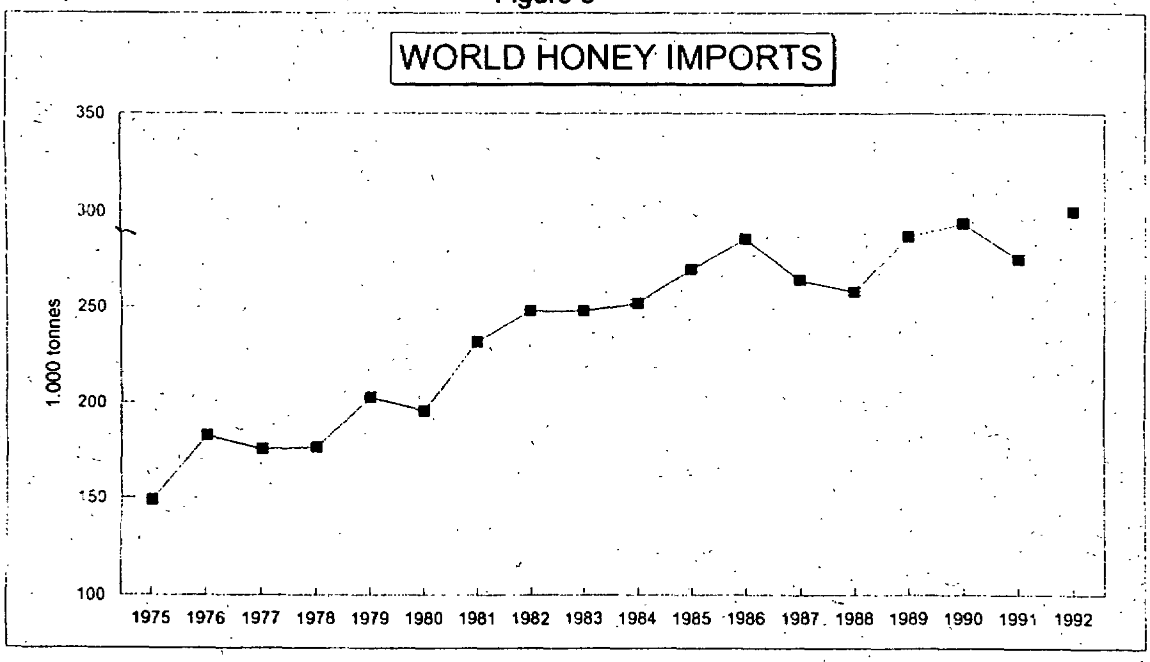

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Table 5

HONEY SUPPLY BALANCE

	EUR12	BLEU	DK	DE	ELL	ESP	FR	IRL	IT	NL	PO	UK
1986/1987												
Usable production ('000 t)	85	1	3	16	12	17	(24)	0	7	0	3	2
Total imports	144	6	3	86	2	9	11	1	11	7	1	25
Total exports	6	2	1	15	0	2	2	0	0	3	0	1
Intra-EC trade (imp.)	18	2	0	2	1	0	5	0	3	4	0	1
Internal use												
- human consumption	223	5	5	87	14	24	33	1	18	4	4	26
Human consumption (kg/person)	0,7	0,5	1,0	1,3	1,3	0,6	0,6	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,4	0,5
Self-sufficiency (%)	38	20	60	18	86	71	73	0	39	0	75	8
1987/1988												
Usable production ('000 t)	92	1	3	16	13	22	(24)	0	7	0	3	3
Total imports	138	5	4	82	2	9	9	1	9	10	1	23
Total exports	7	1	2	14	0	2	2	0	0	2	0	1
Intra-EC trade (imp.)	17	1	2	1	1	0	5	0	2	4	0	1
Internal use												
- human consumption	223	5	5	84	15	29	31	1	16	8	4	25
Human consumption (kg/person)	0,7	0,5	1,0	1,4	1,4	0,7	0,6	0,3	0,3	0,5	0,4	0,4
Self-sufficiency (%)	41	20	60	19	87	76	77	0	44	0	75	12
1988/1989												
Usable production ('000 t)	94	1	3	18	12	21	(25)	0	8	0	3	3
Total imports	136	6	4	86	2	5	9	1	10	8	1	24
Total exports	8	2	2	17	0	2	3	0	0	2	0	1
Intra-EC trade (imp.)	20	2	2	2	1	0	5	0	2	4	0	2
Internal use												
- human consumption	222	5	5	87	14	24	31	1	18	6	4	26
Human consumption (kg/person)	0,7	0,5	1,0	1,5	1,3	0,5	0,8	0,3	0,3	0,4	0,4	0,5
Self-sufficiency (%)	42	20	60	21	86	88	81	0	44	0	75	12

Sources: Eurostat (Cronos)
() = Member States
italics = DG VI estimates

[redacted]

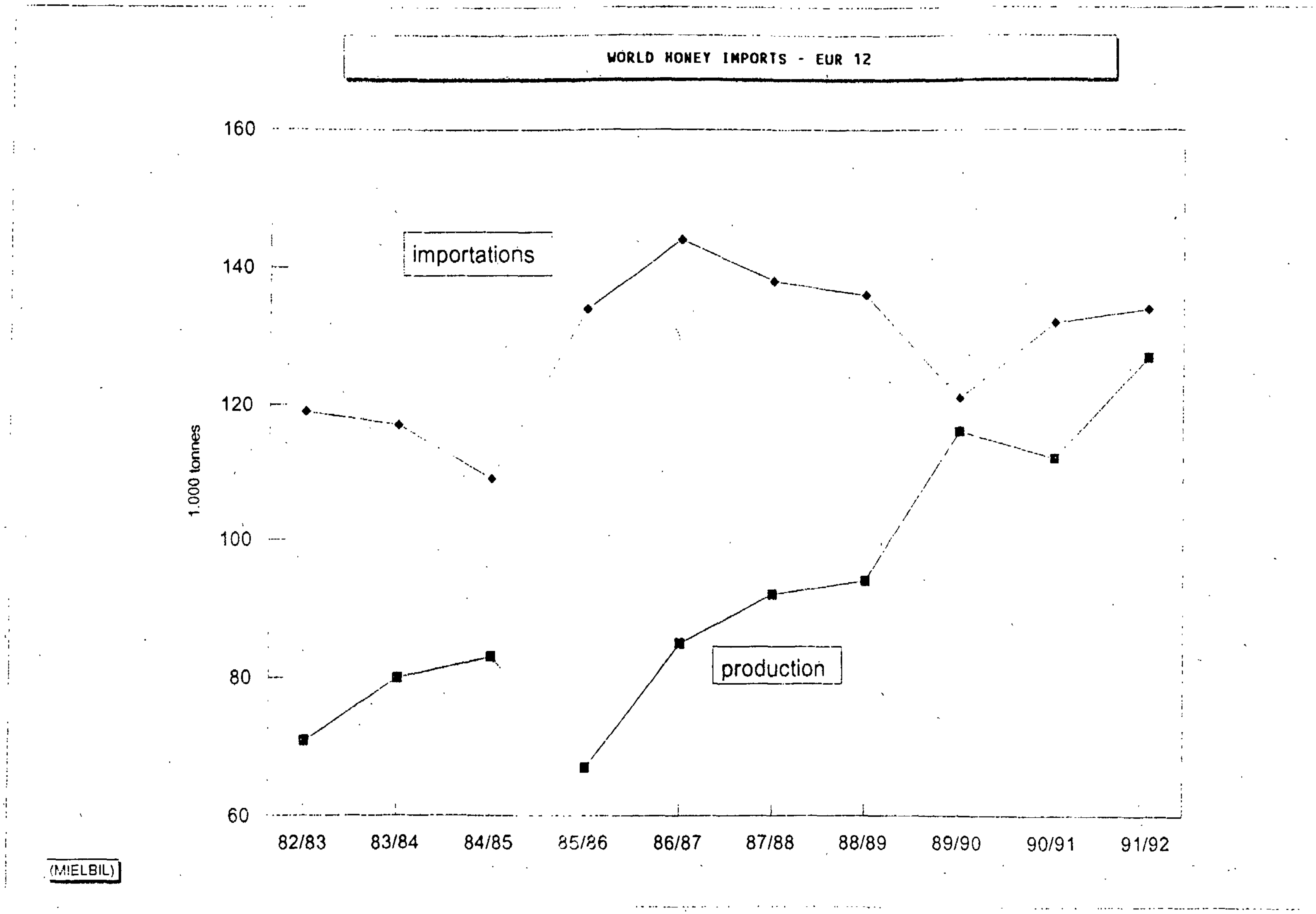
Table 5 (continued)

HONEY SUPPLY BALANCE

	EUR12	BLEU	DK	DE	ELL	ESP	FR	IRL	IT	NL	PO	UK
1989/1990												
Usable production ('000 t)	116	1	3	29	12	21	(35)	0	8	0	3	4
Total imports	121	6	3	80	2	2	8	1	11	8	1	23
Total exports	6	2	1	16	0	4	4	0	0	2	0	1
Intra-EC trade (imp.)	23	2	0	4	1	0	4	0	3	5	0	2
Internal use												
- human consumption	231	5	5	93	14	19	39	1	19	6	4	26
Human consumption (kg/person)	0,7	0,5	1,0	1,5	1,3	0,5	0,8	0,3	0,3	0,4	0,4	0,5
Self-sufficiency (%)	50,2	20	60	31,2	85,7	110,5	89,7	0	42,1	0	75	15,4
1990/1991												
Usable production ('000 t)	112,1	(0,2)	3	25	8	23	(35)	0,1	8	(0,8)	4	5
Total imports	131,7	6,4	3,5	87,8	2,2	1,9	7,1	1	11,8	8,9	0,5	26,4
Total exports	7,3	1	1	11,6	1,9	7,2	4,4	0,1	0,5	0,7	0	1
Intra-EC trade (imp.)	25,8	2,3	1,4	7,1	1,6	0,2	4,8	0,5	2,4	4,8	0	0,7
Internal use												
- human consumption	236,5	5,6	5,5	101,2	8,3	17,7	37,7	1	19,3	9,0	4,5	30,4
Human consumption (kg/person)	0,7	0,5	1,1	1,3	0,8	0,5	0,7	0,3	0,3	0,6	0,5	0,5
Self-sufficiency (%)	47,4	3,6	54,5	24,7	96,4	129,9	92,8	10	41,5	8,9	88,9	16,4
1991/1992												
Usable production ('000 t)	126,7	(0,2)	3	(25)	14	25	(36)	0,1	(12)	(0,8)	(5,6)	5
Total imports	134,7	7,3	3,6	90	2,3	6,5	8,5	1,4	13	8,8	0,4	17
Total exports	9,4	1,5	1,5	12	0,3	7,1	5,1	0,1	0,4	0,6	0	0,9
Intra-EC trade (imp.)	24,1	1,9	1,4	3,4	1,6	1	6,5	0,6	2,4	4,6	0	0,7
Internal use												
- human consumption	252	6,0	5,1	103	16	24,4	39,4	1,4	24,6	9,0	6	21,1
Human consumption (kg/person)	0,7	0,6	1	1,3	1,6	0,6	0,7	0,4	0,4	0,6	0,6	0,4
Self-sufficiency (%)	50,3	3,3	58,8	24,3	87,5	102,5	91,4	7,1	48,8	8,9	93,3	23,7

Sources: Eurostat (Cronos)
() = Member States
Italics = DG VI estimates

Fig. 4


WORLD HONEY IMPORTS - EUR 12
160
140
120
100
80
60
1.000 tonnes
importations
production
82/83
83/84
84/85
85/86
86/87
87/88
88/89
89/90
90/91
91/92
(MIELBIL)

27

Table 6

NUMBER OF BEEKEEPERS 1992

	Hives		Beekeepers			Hives per beekeeper (commerc.)
	total	commercial	total	commercial	% commerc.	
B	100 000		12 000		0,0	
DK	110 000	20 000	8 000	100	1,3	200
D	1 010 000	80 000	94 000	400	0,4	200
ELL	1 225 000	770 000	23 000	3 000	13,0	257
ESP	1 854 000	1 242 400	20 161	4 560	22,6	272
F	1 434 000	528 000	100 000	3 000	3,0	176
IRL	21 960	3 200	2 250	64	2,8	50
IT	1 000 000	300 000	80 000	1 000	1,3	300
LUX	10 213	240	650	1	0,2	240
NL	65 000	2 500	10 000	10	0,1	250
PO	510 000	177 000	50 000	1 000	2,0	177
UK	200 000	40 000	35 000	200	0,6	200
EUR12	7 540 173	3 163 340	435 061	13 335	3,1	237

Source: COPA and Member States.

Table 7

HONEY PRODUCTION BY TYPE - 1992
(tonnes)

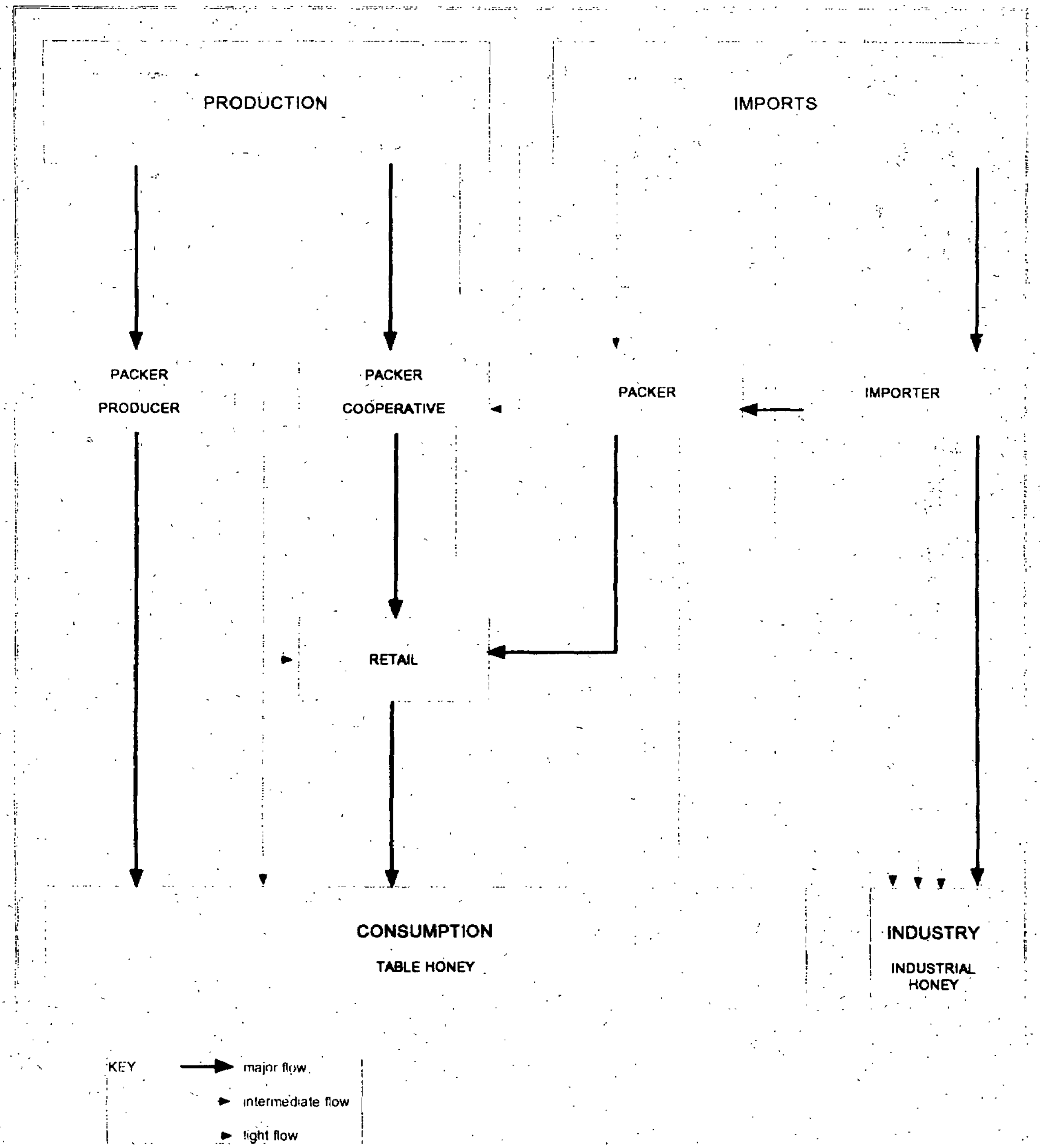
	Multifloral	Other	Total	% Multifloral
B	n.d.	n.d.	200	n.d.
DK	2 940	60	3 000	98
D	15 000	10 500	25 500	59
ELL	3 435	10 315	13 750	25
ESP	23 000	4 650	27 650	83
F	26 000	6 000	32 000	81
IRL	n.d.	n.d.	140	n.d.
IT	9 600	2 400	12 000	80
LUX	n.d.	n.d.	125	n.d.
NL	n.d.	n.d.	800	n.d.
PO	760	4 240	5 000	15
UK	4 000	175	4 175	96
EUR12	**84 735**	**38 340**	**123 075**	**69**

Source: COPA and Member States.

x - SC-30

Figure 5

HONEY : STRUCTURE OF MARKETING



(MIELFLUX)

 [redacted]

Table 8

HONEY: IMPORTS

(tonnes)

EUR12					
Origin	**1988**	**1989**	**1990**	**1991**	**1992**
Argentina	27 600	23 800	21 400	27 300	38 900
Mexico	30 000	31 300	34 500	36 600	30 200
China	11 800	8 100	9 350	13 300	24 800
Cuba	3 100	3 100	3 000	7 400	9 400
Uruguay	4 500	2 800	2 400	2 880	5 600
Hungary	9 200	13 700	10 240	7 750	4 900
Australia	9 400	9 600	7 500	6 400	4 400
USSR	10 200	11 100	9 200	7 800	1 600
Russia					2 200
TOTAL	**136 000**	**131 000**	**119 000**	**131 600**	**145 000**

GERMANY					
Origin	**1988**	**1989**	**1990**	**1991**	**1992**
Mexico	21 680	22 730	24 430	27 670	24 820
Argentina	15 040	12 340	11 300	16 720	22 290
China	3 350	1 620	1 600	2 820	9 410
Hungary	5 420	8 490	4 540	3 390	2 000
TOTAL	**82 200**	**81 600**	**73 050**	**83 560**	**86 180**

FRANCE					
Origin	**1988**	**1989**	**1990**	**1991**	**1992**
China	477	335	350	425	458
Hungary	686	841	1 316	937	340
Argentina	860	819	313	36	224
Canada	371	624	357	337	178
Mexico	482	382	189	84	104
TOTAL	4 300	3 600	2 800	2 100	1 500

UNITED KINGDOM					
Origin	**1988**	**1989**	**1990**	**1991**	**1992**
China	6 800	5 000	6 150	6 400	7 200
Cuba	160	275	930	1 150	4 000
Mexico	5 170	6 150	8 000	6 700	3 800
Australia	4 500	4 400	4 500	3 500	2 500
Argentina	1 400	1 300	2 200	1 750	1 100
USSR	0	70	0	11	100
TOTAL	**22 250**	**20 500**	**24 250**	**21 500**	**22 300**

Source: Comext

Table 9

HONEY: IMPORT PRICES (EU)

(commercial ecu/kg)

EUR 12					
Origin	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Argentina	0,68	0,74	0,74	0,83	0,81
Mexico	0,76	0,80	0,74	0,82	0,86
China	0,74	0,78	0,75	0,82	0,80
Cuba	0,70	0,69	0,75	0,76	0,78
Uruguay	0,65	0,74	0,76	0,81	0,85
Hungary	1,00	0,96	1,12	1,19	1,34
Australia	0,77	0,78	0,76	0,85	0,87
USSR	0,52	0,55	0,59	0,65	0,69
Russia					0,67
TOTAL	**0,79**	**0,82**	**0,81**	**0,88**	**0,89**

GERMANY					
Origin	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Mexico	0,77	0,83	0,76	0,81	0,86
Argentina	0,67	0,73	0,73	0,81	0,82
China	0,78	0,89	0,94	0,92	0,84
Hungary	0,87	0,82	0,99	1,11	1,45
TOTAL	**0,79**	**0,81**	**0,80**	**0,87**	**0,91**

FRANCE					
Origin	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
China	0,96	0,83	0,76	0,91	0,83
Hungary	1,52	1,63	1,49	1,25	1,37
Argentina	0,68	0,75	0,76	0,97	0,84
Canada	1,02	0,96	1,10	1,24	1,17
Mexico	0,72	0,75	0,69	0,74	0,91
TOTAL	**0,98**	**1,07**	**1,21**	**1,16**	**1,11**

UNITED KINGDOM					
Origin	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
China	0,69	0,69	0,65	0,74	0,72
Cuba	0,73	0,70	0,81	0,80	0,78
Mexico	0,71	0,72	0,69	0,83	0,80
Australia	0,77	0,76	0,75	0,86	0,85
Argentina	0,66	0,68	0,72	0,86	0,82
USSR		0,58		0,91	0,57
TOTAL	**0,74**	**0,74**	**0,72**	**0,82**	**0,82**

Source: Comext

 [redacted]

Table 10

HONEY: EXPORTS

(tonnes)

EUR 12: INTRA-COMMUNITY					
Destination	**1988**	**1989**	**1990**	**1991**	**1992**
France	3 700	3 590	3 000	3 330	4 140
Netherlands	3 390	3 480	4 100	3 740	3 980
Germany	2 650	3 590	6 390	4 680	3 130
Spain	45	240	195	120	1 520
BLEU	1 875	1 900	2 190	2 030	1 400
Greece	1 130	985	1 485	1 200	1 300
Denmark	975	580	770	865	1 130
Italy	1 640	2 380	1 750	1 250	1 110
United Kingdom	630	770	1 970	890	380
Ireland	590	440	600	240	250
Portugal	20	85	55	45	60
TOTAL	**16 650**	**18 040**	**22 500**	**18 400**	**18 400**

EUR12: THIRD COUNTRIES					
Destination	**1988**	**1989**	**1990**	**1991**	**1992**
Ceuta & Melilla	184	380	1 081	2 286	3 353
Saudi Arabia	1 431	1 014	1 288	1 542	1 534
Switzerland	1 711	1 546	1 235	1 344	1 341
Canary Islands	481	514	388	464	647
TOTAL	**6 796**	**5 790**	**6 169**	**8 330**	**10 690**

GERMANY: THIRD COUNTRIES					
Destination	**1988**	**1989**	**1990**	**1991**	**1992**
Saudi Arabia	1 330	980	1 200	1 350	1 390
Switzerland	780	860	660	700	640
Austria	150	230	140	200	290
Pakistan	100	100	150	250	150
TOTAL	**3 270**	**3 040**	**3 030**	**3 640**	**3 540**

SPAIN: THIRD COUNTRIES					
Destination	**1988**	**1989**	**1990**	**1991**	**1992**
Ceuta & Melilla	180	380	1 080	2 290	3 350
Canary Islands	460	490	370	430	630
Israel	60		20	60	370
Saudi Arabia	60	20	60	170	130
TOTAL	**1 090**	**1 430**	**1 920**	**3 460**	**5 140**

Source: Comext

[redacted]

Table 11

BEEKEEPING: STATE AIDS
(notified to Commission)

COUNTRY	ITALY	SPAIN			GERMANY			FRANCE	
REGION	Lazio	Castilla-La-Mancha	Extrema-dura	Castilla-Léon	Sachsen	Hessen	Bayern	Provence	Corsica
Total amount (ECUm)	0,33	0,85	2,5	1,5	0,1	0,2	0,88	0,04	0,04
Unit amount (ecu/hive)	-	-	10	11	5	2,5	-	-	-
Duration	1988-1990	unspecified	unspecified	unspecified	1993-1995	1993-1995	1993-1995	unspecified	unspecified
Objective:									
- pollination	×		×	×	×	×	×	×	×
- stock maintenance		×					×	×	
- increase in number of hives					×		×		
- training	×								
- improvement of marketing	×								
- health programme			×						
- countryside tourism									×

Source: DG VI.

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