



Strategies for Honey Marketing in India

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Honey industry in the country can well become a major foreign exchange earner if international standards are met. Bee-keeping is an age-old traditional in India but it is considered a no investment profit giving venture in most areas. It has been recognized that it has the potential to develop as a prime agri-horticultural and forest based industry. Much of the forest honey is sold to the pharmaceutical and food industries, where it is processed and used in different formulations. Apiary honey is usually processed at the producer level. This consists mainly of heating the honey and filtering. A few bee keepers or honey produces cooperative societies have better processing facilities that involve killing of honey fermenting yeast. Indian honey has a good export market. With the use of modern collection, storage, beekeeping equipments, honey processing plants and bottling technologies, the potential export market can be achieved.

Introduction

Honey is a sweet viscous aromatic liquid food produced by the bees using nectar and pollen from flowers. The variety of honey produced by honey bees is depending on type of flower which they forage. Honey bees convert nectar into honey by a process of regurgitation and evaporation. They store it as a primary food source in wax comb. Honey has the ability to absorb moisture directly from the air. The amount of water the honey will absorb is depend on the relative humidity of the air, this hygroscopic nature of honey requires to be stored in sealed containers to prevent fermentation.

Maintaining Honey Quality

For honey marketing, it is highly essential to maintain its quality, both for domestic selling as well as for its export. Following pre-harvest as well as post-harvest measures are helpful in ensuring better honey quality:

1. Minimize the use of chemicals in beekeeping
2. Try to maintain a high quality of honey at all stages
3. Maintain colonies on supper and use queen excluder between brood chamber and super
4. Extract only ripe honey
5. Extract honey only from brood free supers
6. Filter out the honey just at the time of extraction or immediately after extraction
7. Store honey in containers made of food grade martial
8. Keep honey in air-tight condition
9. Store honey in cool and low humidity place
10. Try to sell the produce to the honey traders, etc., at the earliest possible and as soon as it's good price is offered.

Attractive Packing and Information Labeling

For earning higher profits, it is highly advisable to undertake self-marketing of the produce in retail packaging. For such marketing following points will be helpful for easier and more profitable selling of honey.

1. Give an attractive brand name of your honey
2. Always use new / clean bottles for honey packing
3. Honey should always be filled-up in wide mouthed bottles
4. Lid of the bottle should have the provision of its tight sealing
5. The packing should be made in different sizes for catering to the varying need and demand of the consumers
6. The packing must bear an attractive label, giving various information about the product including the brand name, address of packer, his phone number, lot number, the source of bee flora, date of packing, quality, price, specific instruction about the particular honey, a few of its important uses etc.
7. Label must leave a part of the bottle free for a look at the produce by the purchaser
8. The produce must be free of any colloidal material, foam/froth/bees wax, etc., and should be uniform in consistency
9. Label may show a special note about the natural tendency of honeys for granulation and in short the way to liquefy it
10. Try to obtain ISI of AGMARK for your honey as this will ensure the consumer's confidence in your produce
11. Prepare a hand out mentioning briefly the composition, characteristics and usage of the honey
12. Bring out a special and highly attractive gift packing for various festival and occasions
13. Progressive beekeepers may explore innovative packaging like tetra-packs, pouch packing, straw packing, etc.

Marketing Ways

Beekeepers may follow any of the following ways for selling their produce

1. Direct selling by self
2. Door-to-door / direct selling on commission basis by employing sales persons.
3. Supply to the wholesale distributors
4. Supply at the retail shops
5. Opening of sale booths on road sides or near / at various tourist places
6. Putting up sale stalls at various festivals, farmers markets, agricultural fairs, beekeeping workshops/conference and exhibition, etc.
7. Supply to various agricultural marketing societies / cooperatives
8. Selling through a particular society or self help group (SHG) using a common brand for the produce
9. Various governmental departments like tourism, railways, transport, etc., may be approached for supply of specialized honey packing to the public
10. Publicity of the honey brand through various means including display at various exhibitions and occasional mass gathering of people, through print media, electronic media including at various radio and TV channels, would also be helpful in enhancing the sale.

Conclusion

Honey is a delicious and highly nutritive food. Honey production increased because of a higher number of bee keepers and a higher productivity, modern technologies applied, a more efficient honey chain needs production, collection, processing, bottling, labeling, packaging and marketing on the domestic and foreign market.