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**ECONOMICS, BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, TOURISM AND STATISTICS**

**INVESTIGATION OF THE COMMERCIAL SITUATION AMONG BEEKEEPERS IN HUNGARY FROM 2010 TO THE PRESENT**

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**Abstract:** *The beekeeping and beekeeping sectors are very important sectors on a global scale. This is because these sectors play a key role in agriculture and therefore play an essential role in the food supply of humankind. In our research, we would like to examine this global process at the Hungarian level (what commercial opportunities do Hungarian beekeepers have).*

*The main goal of our research is to gain insight into the commercial situation of beekeepers and to help beekeepers who read this research sell their products more efficiently.*

*We chose this topic because in the current COVID period, it is important to implement a healthy diet in our diet (to which honey can contribute). In our research, we also conducted a questionnaire survey (at the national level among Hungarian consumers). The questionnaire was completed by more than 650 people, and the analysis was performed based on the responses received. We also conducted a survey on the part of farmers, in which we analyzed the investment of a real economy in the sector. Based on the conclusions obtained in the analyzes, we compiled the SWOT analysis, in which the advantages, disadvantages, opportunities and dangers of the sector were presented. Our aim is to get a real picture of the commercial situation of beekeepers in Hungary by conducting research, which may also have an impact on honey consumption in Romania.*

**Keywords:** *beekeeping, SWOT analysis, research, honey*

**JEL classification:** *M12*

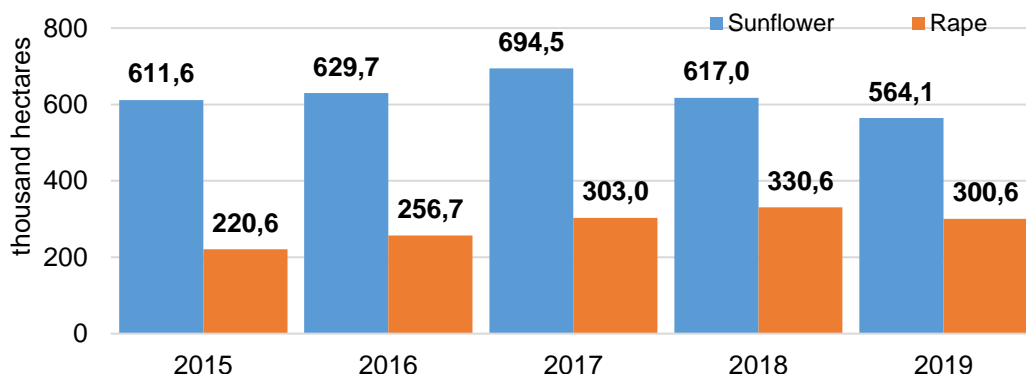
## **1. Introduction**

Beekeeping and the beekeeping sector can be considered a very important sector in Hungary on a global level. The presence of honey for people nowadays is also important for food. In our research, we would like to examine this global process at the Hungarian level, and we also conducted a questionnaire survey on the daily consumption of honey in Hungary. The main goal of our research is to get an insight into the situation of honey production and consumption, and to be able to give suggestions about the trade of beekeepers. In our research, we also conducted a SWOT analysis, which provides an overview of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the current beekeeping sector. With our research I would like to get an idea of the commercial situation of beekeepers, what opportunities they have to gain sales revenue after the production of their products (as well as what the target audience is in case of continuous consumption of honey).

## 2. Literature

### 2.1. Production of honey

Bee colonies play a key role in Hungary not only because of their excellent product (honey, propolis, etc.), but also because of their pollination in agriculture. Regarding the types of honey, we also distinguish between flower honey and licorice honey. There are many varieties of flower honey in Hungary (the most special is acacia honey, which can only be produced in the Carpathian Basin and China). Flower honeys are honeys from which commercial quantities can be produced, as these flowers bloom in large quantities at the same time. The most significant flower honeys in Hungary are rapeseed honey, acacia honey and sunflower honey (Zilahy, 2012). In Hungary, the beekeeping season begins with rapeseed. During rapeseed flowering, bees are most aggressive during the beekeeping season (due to the dormant period in winter). The beekeeping season continues with acacia forests, as there is a relatively large amount of acacia forest in Hungary (a good beekeeper can migrate to several blooms in the forests). The third most important honey plant in chronological order is sunflower, followed only by other plants with a smaller proportion. Sunflower honey areas are mainly located in the southern part of Hungary (Fabula, 1983).



**Figure 1.** Harvest area of sunflower and rapeseed in Hungary in the period 2015-2019  
Source: Own compilation

### 2.2. Physiological effects of honey and its by-products

The beneficial physiological effects of honey are increasingly known in Hungary. Perhaps the most valuable of the by-products, royal jelly, produced by young working bees separated from their pharyngeal glands (serving as food for the mother and larvae), is very valuable and can be used in many ways in medicine. Royal jelly improves the honey-producing abilities of families in the same way as pollen production, but it is difficult to collect. Most bees produce during maternal rearing, at which point they build a much larger-than-average spleen on the frames and produce plenty of royal jelly next to the egg. Consumption of this large amount of royal jelly turns the common larva into a womb (in Far Eastern countries, royal jelly is used to preserve youth). Another practical benefit of pempő is that it can be used to reduce nausea-like malaise during pregnancy. Today's world market price of royal jelly sold in large quantities is USD 1/10 g (processed royal jelly is much more expensive at this time, USD 30/10 g). When buying a royal jelly product, special attention should be paid to the place of origin and distributor, only buy a product from a reliable source, as it is diluted with honey in many cases for durability. Royal jelly is already consumed in the world today as a dietary supplement, strength booster, immune booster, fertility aid and skin care (Bruneau, 2019).

“Propolis” also known as “beeswax” is a naturally produced resin that is collected from surrounding plants and functions as an immune system booster. Propolis is also used by bees as a means of protection (covering many areas of the hive) to protect their young. Its overall composition is 50% resin, 30% beeswax, 10% essential oil, 5% pollen and about the same amount of plant debris. Each bee colony makes a small amount of propolis made from different elements, depending on what vegetation is available to them near their home. The propolis must be collected by the beekeeper (scraped off the corners of the hive, the top of the frames or the sides of the drawers). Propolis was already used for healing in ancient Greece, later records were found among the Egyptians that it was used to preserve corpses. Propolis is still used today for health and fitness purposes (Bruneau 2019).

Collected pollen serves as one of the main foods for bees, but it also has a beneficial physiological effect on humans. Many beekeepers occasionally focus on collecting pollen instead of honey (the purchase price of pollen is much higher than that of honey). Pollen is not a durable product, many believe bees preserve it with honey (Sőtér, 1895). Both pollen and honey have been used by mankind since ancient times. According to records, pollen was consumed by our ancestors as a hemostatic or booster drink (Bruneau, 2019).

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Honey is high in nutrients, minerals and various vitamins, which is why it has been used with great love for centuries. Honey is an essential part of a healthy diet as it is very rich in vitamins and has an excellent mineral content (a valuable source of enzymes). Its regular consumption has health-preserving and disease-preventing effects. In addition to its digestive aid, its water-secreting and calming effect is also important. The honey produced by the bees inhibits the growth of fungi and viruses, is also effective against bacteria (has an antibiotic effect), soothes stomach ulcers and abdominal complaints. Not only does honey have excellent physiological effects when used orally, but research has shown that it can also be used for burns. Due to its extremely good moisture-binding properties, honey is also used by cosmetics companies to prevent dehydration (Bruneau, 2019).

### **2.3. The economic situation of beekeepers in the EU**

Hungarian honey is one of the high quality products in the European Union. In the European Union, four countries (Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria and Spain) are able to produce and export more than their domestic use. The production volume of the four countries was 260 thousand tons of honey in 2020 as well. Based on a 2019 statement by Péter Bross, President of the National Hungarian Beekeeping Association (hereinafter OMME), “Honey prices have fallen to such an extent in recent years that domestic exporters have stopped buying because the price of honey per barrel has become degradingly low” (Halmos, 2019). Beekeepers can expect subsidies from the European Union in 2019-2022. also in the period of. The support fund for beekeepers is EUR 120 million (approximately HUF 39 billion). From this amount, money can be applied for education, starting a beekeeping business and pest control (MAGRO, 2019).

Countries	Number of beekeepers (person)		Change (%)
	2017-2019	2020-2022	
<b>Germany</b>	116 000	127 259	109,71%
<b>Poland</b>	62 575	74 302	118,74%
<b>Czech Republic</b>	49 486	61 572	124,42%
<b>Italy</b>	50 000	56 059	112,12%
<b>United Kingdom</b>	37 888	40 275	106,30%
<b>Austria</b>	25 277	29 745	117,68%
<b>Spain</b>	23 816	28 786	120,87%
<b>Romania</b>	22 930	23 161	101,01%
<b>Hungary</b>	21 565	22 447	104,09%

**Table 1.** The country with the 10 highest beekeeping populations in the European Union (2017-2019 real, 2020-2022 forecast)

Source: own compilation based on Eurostat (2019)

In terms of results in 2019, Europe is the second largest honey producer in the world (after China). The European Union has a total of 17.5 million beehives, owned by 600,000 registered butchers. These numbers may seem high, but this amount represents only about 60 percent of honey consumption. Most honey is imported from China and Ukraine by the European Union (MAGRO, 2019). The 10 countries in Europe with the highest beekeeping populations are shown in Table 1, which shows an increase for each of the countries listed. The highest increases were in the Czech Republic, Spain and Poland, as well as in Austria. With the Hungarian stock, 7% of the European Union's honey stock is produced (*European Commission*, 2019).

#### 2.4. Marketing opportunities for beekeepers

In addition to production opportunities, beekeepers should also pay attention to marketing and other management methods. With the help of marketing, the beekeeper can satisfy other customer needs in addition to making a profit. Although it can be of great help to beekeepers to create just one business plan, most of them underestimate these tools, preferring to minimize costs and achieve higher productivity rates (Papp, 2012).

A marketing approach is essential in farming if the beekeeper wants to recognize and meet consumer needs. Currently, most beekeepers offer products for sale that they can produce easily and efficiently. If a beekeeper wants to make a profit, he needs to be present in the market with products that are competitive and better than his competitors. Market research is very important to reach new segments of the market or to increase profits in areas already present. By choosing the right communication channel, they can reach their target audience, which can play a decisive role in the development of demand, as it can build a relationship of trust without investing more energy (Rekettye et al, 2015).

The most important part of gaining an advantage is the continuous market presence (retaining loyal customers, reaching new customers). It is essential to adapt their target audience to each consumer's preferences and to increase product quality and confidence in them. The goal is to make sales at all times, but when the beekeeping season is in the middle (when the producer is unable to be present at sales), sales should also be made by a person who is properly informed. Particular attention should be paid to the quality of the product and its parameters should be constant at all times, which includes taste, appearance and texture. In addition to the internal contents, special attention must be paid to the packaging and the container. It is best to portion the honey into jars. The visible properties of the product (color,

texture, crystallization) are important to consumers. It requires a high level of expertise on the part of beekeepers to crystallize their product as late as possible (maintaining an appropriate proportion of glucose levels). Kits that are high in glucose are recommended to be sold in cream honey form (Mucsi, 2012).

The demand for a beekeeper's products may be higher than its supply. In this case, you can raise the price or buy a product of similar quality from another producer (but the quality should be constant). If a novice beekeeper's sales suddenly show a large upward trend, in the absence of inexperience, he may not stay on target but cut into more than one thing at a time. Therefore, it is important for the beekeeper to formulate and stick to short- and long-term goals as well (Gulyás, 2014).

The beekeeper must also pay attention to the sales environment (it is important to decorate the stand in the market; the beekeeper should always sell in the same place, this shows trust, loyalty develops between the buyer and the beekeeper, etc.). Beekeepers can also use a "complementary strategy", which are methods of highlighting or tying. In a "highlighting strategy", a main product is named and the price of the product package is adjusted accordingly, while consumers purchase an additional product or service in addition to choosing the main product. The tying strategy offers a package of products that usually gives the product a better price than what the customer would receive separately. This works especially effectively for price-sensitive consumers, or for consumers who want to save time by buying everything in one place (Mucsi, 2012).

### **3. Material and methodology**

In our research, we conducted a questionnaire survey in Hungary in order to assess market and consumer needs. With the questionnaire we surveyed the honey consumption habits of Hungarians, as the survey of honey consumption can help beekeepers to have a better view of the sector. The number of completed questionnaires was around 650 (national survey), most of which could be used in the calculations. The respondents covered the entire territory of the country with their answers. Due to the COVID period, the completion was largely done online in professional groups, social networking sites, and in person with acquaintances. In the research, we also prepared our SWOT analysis of the beekeeping sector, in which we gathered the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the sector.

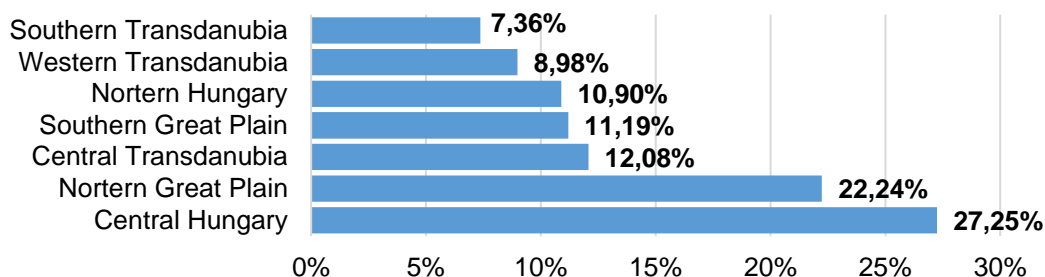
### **4. Material and methodology**

#### **4.1. Demographic results of the questionnaire survey**

The survey of honey consumption needs in Hungary was assessed by filling in a questionnaire. In addition to demographic data, the questionnaire also included professional and consumer questions. More than 90% of the respondents had at least a high school diploma. 20% had OKJ, FOSZ or other higher education, while 20% also had a degree. The proportion of people with a primary school education was minimal. Based on educational attainment, it can be concluded that residents with higher studies consume a higher proportion of honey (they are more aware of the beneficial effects of honey). Based on marital status, 2/3 of the respondents are married or in a relationship. Singles accounted for 20% of those surveyed. As the proportion of people living in a relationship was very high, it was worth examining the number of children in a given household as well. 15% of respondents did not yet have children. 33-33 percent of the respondents had 1 or 2 children, and the remainder have 3 or more children. The majority of the residents surveyed were working-age people who are presumably involved in determining the product composition of their own family household or appearing on the market as earners. The average age of the respondents was 36 years (the oldest was a person aged 73 who can be considered an

outstanding value based on age). The two largest age groups of the respondents were the 20-30 and 30-40 age groups, respectively, who accounted for approximately 60% of the total. Not only does this age group make decisions about running a household, but 75 percent of those surveyed are raising children, which also increases the amount of honey consumed, as there are so many places to hear that honey also has a health-preserving effect.

As we conducted a national survey, all regions of Hungary participated in the survey (Figure 1). The highest participation was from Central Hungary (due to the capital) and the Northern Great Plain region.



**Figure 1.** Presentation of the counties participating in the questionnaire survey  
Source: Own compilation

The first professional question was whether the respondent consumed honey regularly. Here, nearly 2/3 of the respondents gave regular answers and 1/3 gave rare or never answers. As we were also interested in the responses of honey consumers and non-honey consumers, we present the analyzes in a separate subsection.

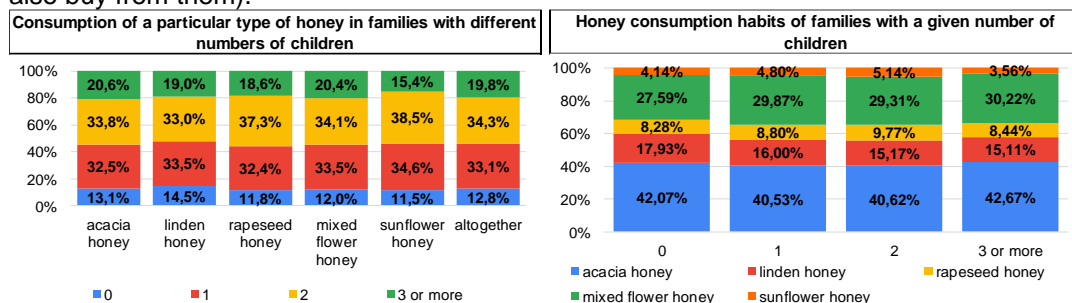
#### 4.2. Evaluation of the responses of regular consumers of honey

73 percent of those who complete the questionnaire consume honey regularly or when they run out of supplies at the next purchase. The surveys show that in Hungary they like to consume honey not only because of its taste, but also because consumers are aware of its beneficial physiological effects. The responses revealed that nearly 90 percent of respondents fill in honey based on quality, which is definitely an advantage for artisan beekeepers who sell their honey in retail in glazed form. More than 90% of quality-minded respondents buy honey from a producer (home, market, other place), only a small proportion of residents buy such a product from a retail or wholesale location. In terms of packaging, products purchased from a retail or wholesale location tend to be small bottles (250-400 g) or "Teddy honey" (300 g), while in the case of producer purchases, they mainly buy 1 kg small packaging. Sixty percent of fillers buy more than one type of honey at a time, giving beekeepers the opportunity to design packages as part of their product policy, increasing the value of one-time purchases. Of course, beekeepers need to set their pricing in such a way that by buying these products together, the buyer pays less than if they bought them separately. You can make the packages on offer more valuable by giving the beekeeper various by-products in the package (for example: pollen, propolis or a scented candle made of beeswax). These additional products can be attractive to buyers because these products themselves are very difficult to obtain. It is advisable for beekeepers to sell these by-products as complementary products or to give them as gifts to returning kicks in their purchases for customer retention.

However, the fact that a larger package can weigh up to several kilograms can be a problem when shopping. This can be a big problem if someone buys that package, but carrying the quantity you want to buy is already a problem. Approximately 70 percent of fillers, based on

research, prefer a kilogram package, so any additional products would add to this weight, so the size of the packages should be reconsidered. Based on our recommendation, it is advisable to offer the sale of honey packs in smaller jars (so that customers can buy several types of honey in 500 gram packs).

It is also possible (especially during this pandemic period) for the beekeeper to undertake delivery in his settlement for customers who buy more than a certain minimum batch (the acquaintance between the buyer and the seller can be broadened, and a returning customer base can be formed). With delivery, the difficulty of carrying can be avoided, and the quantity of the purchased item can also increase. Taking advantage of these opportunities, market expansion is also possible (transport should be organized when there are fewer beekeeping tasks). Based on the questionnaire survey, it can also be stated that 78 percent of the respondents have a friend of a practicing beekeeper in the circle of acquaintances (and they also buy from them).



**Figure 2.** Honey consumption as a function of children raised in the family  
Source: Own compilation

In the consumer preferences survey, respondents could choose more than one type of honey at a time. Most of the respondents prefer acacia honey (~ 50%), while sunflower was the least sold (the color of the honey purchased is important, as acacia, which suggests an opaque clean look, is the best seller). On the basis of education, in addition to acacia honey, those with primary education chose linden honey, those with higher education preferred rapeseed honey, while those with secondary and graduate education chose mixed flower honey.

If we examine the respondents based on the number of children raised, it can be stated that acacia and flower honey are consumed best in all families, followed by linden, rapeseed and then sunflower honey in each family (Figure 2).

After testing all types of honey, beekeepers are advised that it is more appropriate to sell rapeseed and sunflower honey mixed as mixed flower honey, as surveys show that there is a greater demand for it. This set-up can also be good for the beekeeper, as the beekeeper does not have to pay special attention to which honey enters the honeycombs when grazing for rapeseed and sunflower. Thus, mixed flower honey can be produced immediately in the hives. Rapeseed honey can be of particular interest to consumers if sold as cream honey (due to its early crystallization). This makes it possible to break the texture of high glucose honeys by thorough mixing, so that the crystallized honey will have a more homogeneous texture. When organizing sales, it can be beneficial to pack less purchased honey varieties with higher proportion of purchased honey and sell them together.

The feedback on the packaging of honey based on the application forms is that consumers do not care much about the packaging of the product. Consequently, the main goal should only be to have transparent packaging (the color of the honey is important to consumers). This can be one of the cost-reducing factors in the case of trade in honey (the choice of hygienic packaging is recommended). We do not recommend disposable plastics, as environmental sustainability is becoming increasingly important not only in Hungary but also

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in Europe. We recommend the traditional mason jars, decorated with a simple material. Beekeepers can organize coupon-like promotions with bottle returns, so fewer bottles need to be stored plus (a good solution to protect the environment).

#### **4.3. Evaluating the responses of non-regular honey consumers**

Among the respondents, we were also interested in the opinions of non- or rarely consumers. In market research, information gathered from opponents or neutral consumers can always be useful to producers in developing their product or strategy. 23 percent of respondents indicated a rare need for consumption. Respondents in this group consider the consumption of honey to be useless. Promoting honey consumption to this group could be a potential success factor that could convince them to increase sales. Here, however, it is not the enhancement of one's image that is important, but only the promotion of honey, the emphasis on the positive physiological effects of honey. With this, honey lovers and later honey consumers can also be acquired. However, this can only be a long-term plan. Therefore, honey-loving campaigns should be organized for associations for cost-effectiveness.

In addition, half of non-regular honey consumers consider honey to be too expensive a product. For those price-sensitive buyers who love the taste of honey, selling cheaper flower honey can be beneficial, with information that because of its many ingredients, its physiological effect is more beneficial than other types of honey. If you can convince these buyers to consume, we definitely recommend selling cream honey, as flower honey tends to crystallize quickly most of the time. Since with them the honey will only run out after a long time, the cream honey will retain its texture for a long time.

#### **4.4. Useful marketing tools for beekeepers**

Nowadays, the use of marketing tools plays a significant role. Beekeepers definitely need to put a lot of emphasis on keeping in touch with customers using direct marketing. Being among the first to define your target audience during a direct marketing campaign should be. Acquiring a new customer can generally be said to take a lot more energy than retaining an existing one, so it's also important to determine in advance who you want to reach. This strategy is particularly noteworthy in how we retain our customers. Successful brands, which are the dominant elements of the market, place maintaining the loyalty of existing customers at the heart of their own strategy. Satisfaction with the product can be increased if we provide additional information on the proper use of our product. Loyalty to the beekeeper, which is in the products, is the strongest guarantee for the beekeeper. Beekeepers must be constantly open to presenting their product to consumers and providing them with appropriate information about it. In the long run, this results in the practice of an existing customer remaining loyal to the beekeeper in the face of competition. However, it is not recommended to ignore the fact that competitors may even have better service or higher satisfaction. Of course, it can also happen that they are able to list more suitable features on the side of their products and all this at a better price. The most effective defense to outperform competitors is to know exactly the position of your competitors (advantages, opportunities, disadvantages, and threats).

A good image plays a very important role in gaining an advantage over competitors. In creating an advantage, oral tradition or a customer (if they are satisfied with the product or service) can be very good, as an average of three other consumers are told by a consumer if they have a positive experience with one of the products. In the case of a bad experience, dissatisfaction is said to eleven people based on the opinions of researchers.

Consumers form an opinion on their own about every company they know, so it is very important to maintain the same quality at all times. It is also possible that someone comes



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back with a complaint, in which case, if the beekeeper handles the situation well, he can further strengthen his established image.

#### **4.5. Positioning of apiculture products**

After analyzing the questionnaire, it can be concluded that beekeepers can take an example of the product strategies that surround us. Products with similar properties are called substitute products that are sold at the same time or package and also function similarly and are called complementary products. It is advisable to set up two main strategies for substitute products, these are product family development or brand development. Product family development is usually the introduction of a new product under an existing brand name. This strategy can be done by adding a new introduction to products with the same properties, for example: cream honey. The biggest advantage of this activity is that it is marketed with the usual quality, which makes it easier for consumers to accept the new product. Another way to develop the product family could be for the beekeeper potential to offer the richest selection to its customers. Here, a package can contain not only honey products, but also by-products (royal jelly, propolis or even candles made of beeswax). If a beekeeper gives a gift to the customer above the value of the purchase, it moves the beekeeper's judgment in a positive direction.

#### **4.6. Useful online marketing tools for beekeepers**

Today's trend in general is that in addition to direct marketing, the use of online marketing can increase the commercial success of a business. The commercial work of beekeepers can be easily divided from market days if they manage to build a customer base that they supply with their products rather than in their retail unit. This saves time and focuses on other customers.

We see a great opportunity for beekeepers in online marketing, gaining followers for themselves by using some kind of social service provider. For those interested, she shares photos, such as where she migrated with her bees, or shares practices, successes, and experiences about herself.

Marketing campaigns can be aided by Facebook ads, which are spreading more and more in our rushing world. The first billion users have been reached by Facebook for 8 years (Tóth, 2013). With this tool, you can reach a lot of people easily and quickly. It's a good idea to use ads locally for users between the ages of 30 and 50 (who are presumably raising children) to gain new customers. Be sure to show an ad to a smaller audience more than once to more people than once.

#### **4.7. Content of a business plan tailored to beekeepers**

When preparing a business plan, the main activity should be identified first, followed by the ancillary activities. Already in the planning period, it is advisable to define the vision and mission of the company (which includes what goals we want to achieve).

For the planned scope of activities, it is important to assess the market needs before investing a larger amount or long working hours in it. It is very important that we start communicating with our marketing activities only with a well-defined audience. The prepared plan should also include a customer retention and customer acquisition strategy. The preparation of the sales plan follows the marketing plan, during which the beekeepers position their products according to the choice of their activity. Market research plays a major role in determining the price of products. In each case, we need to decide which audience is the most optimal consumer segment for us. When positioning a product, not only the price is important, but also the composition of the different packages. The great advantage of

beekeepers is that in addition to their main product, it is also possible to sell various by-products.

In each case, planning will help you decide if it is worth sacrificing capital, time, and man-hours for beekeeping work. The plan should include calculations of various costs, investment, and projected revenues (Valentin, 2014). A common method of preparing a business plan is also to prepare a SWOT analysis, which provides an idea of the advantages, potential risks and weaknesses of the investment or decision-making.

#### **4.8. SWOT analysis of the beekeeping sector**

In addition to preparing the marketing plan discussed earlier, a SWOT analysis performed before the investment can also help. This decision-making method has been used all over the world since the mid-20th century. The analysis can be useful not only for companies but also for decision makers. It can be used in almost every area of life: before buying a property, changing jobs, choosing a career, etc. Companies can make the best use of SWOT analysis, not only before an investment, but also before projects or even starting a business itself. Carrying out an analysis is a particular advantage as it can point to factors that may be important to our company (which we didn't even think about before). This method summarizes the circumstances of decision-making in four points: opportunities, threats, strengths, and weaknesses.

When preparing the analysis, it is important to examine the sector with an objective eye. In our opinion, it is also important to carry out a SWOT analysis before starting a beekeeping business. Elements of the SWOT analysis:

Strengths, which is the most important advantage over the competition. It is important to keep in mind the benefits we have, as a novice beekeeper can easily benefit from these:

The accessibility of the Hungarian experience can be considered one of the strengths, as our small country at the European level can boast very good beekeeping results. Market research results and marketing knowledge.

Weaknesses that mean competition lags. Entering the covered market, as the Hungarian market is saturated. Difficulties in acquiring new customers. Other beekeepers who have been in the profession for a longer period of time with a higher staff and more modern equipment.

Opportunities that provide an opportunity to achieve a higher level of development. Possibility of intra-group sales to other European countries. Options include various EU and domestic subsidies for beekeepers for. Introduction of a new sales strategy. Market expansion due to the spread of a healthy lifestyle.

Danger where external factors appear (unfavorable for development): Weather conditions and constantly renewed sprays, mutations of diseases harmful to bees. Malicious people are causing more and more damage to bee colonies by robberies or stealing honey-filled frames from unattended bee colonies.

#### **5. Conclusions and recommendations**

The main goal of our research was to review the difficulties and opportunities of the beekeeping sector in Hungary (taking into account the general difficulties of production and sales). In our research, we conducted a questionnaire survey to assess the consumption potential of honey in Hungary. As the survey was nationwide, the answers provided a unified picture of Hungarian honey consumption habits. Based on the answers received, it can be stated that most consumers are aware of the healthy physiological effects of honey, which is why it can be concluded why the high quality of the purchased product is so important for consumers and whether it comes from a Hungarian producer. Of particular interest,

according to the questionnaires, for honey buyers, the quality of honey and its sourcing from a reliable source is more important than its price.

In our research, we also examined the livelihood opportunities, weaknesses, threats, and strengths inherent in the beekeeping sector (SWOT-analysis). An evaluation of the questionnaires shows that the majority of the respondents are young married, which can be considered a suitable target audience for beekeepers. As the responses show, honey is purchased from producers as opposed to retail units.

It is recommended to beekeepers not to sell their honey to buyers, but at a much higher retail price. It is advisable to sell honey primarily as a package (supplemented with beekeeping by-products), so that higher value purchases can be targeted at the same time. When selling packages, we would introduce local free home delivery over a certain amount of value.

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