

Macuata Women Advance Community through Togetherness in Apiculture



Asenaca Silo with the honey boxes

The expectations of housewives is more often forgotten and taken for granted by everyone and at times even by themselves.

For a group of housewives of Bulileka Village in Macuata, they attempted the extraordinary and exceeded their own expectations by stamping their mark as the Tosovata Women's Group.

'Tosovata' in iTaukei means moving together, which is exactly what they have been doing since the groups inception in 2013.

Group Secretary Asenaca Silo said the group, which consists of 33 women, did

a lot of things together around the village and they assisted whoever needed it. "The group was established on a vision of combating poverty in the village, allowing the group to assist other women and families in the village," she said.

This relationship fostered a bond between these women and eventually led to an income-generating project that all the women showed great interest in – bee keeping.

"We started Apiculture in 2015 and had our first harvest in October of the same year, with the money we earned,

we reinvested it back into our project and purchased more boxes for the expansion of the business," she said.

"Bee-keeping suits us well as there are mothers involved and Apiculture is a fragile business that needs attention and close supervision, just like nurturing a child," said Asenaca.

As the project progressed, the group appointed the services of Ilisapeci Wati, Nemaï Walolo, Asenaca Silo and Marica Namalua to manage the maintenance of the hives.

"This was a new business for us, we were fortunately assisted by Saimoni Tunaqase, a fellow villager who had been extracting honey for quite some time now. We were equipped with a wide range of Apiculture skills, from framing to grafting and queen rearing and the enthusiasm portrayed by the women was a bonus," she said.

Their growing confidence in apiculture was only boosted through the continued support and encouragement of the Ministry of Agriculture, Pacific Centre for Peace Building (PCPB) and Saimoni himself.

"Bees are very sensitive and they prefer to live in areas where flowering plants are abundant and that is why the hives are placed towards the hillside.

The group's well-kept 25 hives have been domesticated to produce honey for local consumption; "In 2017 they harvested 12 gallons of 20 liters of honey generating an amount of \$15,000, an amount we as

first time bee keepers couldn't fathom."

"Our market was Labasa, with orders coming in from individuals and supermarkets and in order to maintain a healthy business relationship, we tried our best to harvest at a maximum, three times in a season and at least once if there was little honey," she said.

The group have also begun to sell bee colonies for \$200.00, complete with queen bees and have taken all necessary precaution to ensure minimal loss of honey during a harvest.

"We are also careful not to exhaust the bees in over harvesting because of starvation and reasons of colonies leaving the hives," said Asenaca.

The women, who have turned out to become quite an experienced group of bee-keepers in their own right continue to operate out of their village community, and given the village lifestyle, they have managed to meet all traditional obligations while also maintaining their apiculture business.

"We have also found it possible during good weather to harvest a few full frames of honey to provide for customers and this does not prevent us from harvesting later," she added, as the maintenance of their hives is exemplary of the hygiene and attention the keepers give to their Apiculture business.

"We have had tests done by the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji during outbreaks or on their normal routine

checks and our hives have been cleared of viral outbreaks, which is a good sign we intend to uphold," she said.

Tosovata Women's Group mission to combat poverty in the village has allowed them to share their knowledge of apiculture with interested individuals in their village.

"Apiculture strengthened the bond and interest of our women and has motivated others to practice it too and we have assisted 5 women establish their own bee-hives with the supply of free colonies and its management to elevate their standard of living to another level.

Keeping up the momentum of their honey business, the women have ventured onto other income-generating projects; "Apart from honey, the group has involved ourselves with other revenue generating projects such as handicraft making which complements our honey business.

The income earned is deposited into the groups' bank account for the wellbeing and welfare of group members and its continued development, and recipients of the funds is agreed upon by the group.

The money earned from the sale of honey is used to pay fees and fares of the tertiary students in the village and is kept aside for rainy days. Through the business, the group have also assisted needy families in their village, the elderly, people with special needs and single parent households, reinforcing the groups' vision of togetherness.

Disaster Hive Management



Flood can reach unexpected levels

1. Move hives from low lying areas to flood free heights.
2. Watch out for other drains, creeks and water ways that might flood the new location.
3. Landslides could also happen so select sites that are safer.
4. Move the hives to safer areas before disaster happens.

Protect from strong winds

As cyclone season approaches, fasten the hives firmly with ropes or belts to prevent from capsized or blowing out into pieces.

Ensure hive stands are firmly anchored in the ground.

Method of moving hives

1. Use wheel barrows, one hive at a time
2. Use stretches
3. Use trailers or pickup trucks if road access is good.
4. Handle the hives gently and work smartly.
5. Prevent hives from dropping, bangs or accidents

Feeding the colonies

1. Continuous rain normally exhausts the production of nectars.

2. Less flowering leads to lack of feed for bees.
3. The reserve honey in the hives is ultimately used.

How to survive the colonies

- * Dry sugar feeding
- * Sugar syrup feeding
- * Sugar candy feeding

Don't let the bees starve to death

- * Ensure there is enough feed in the hive to take through the bad weather
- * Check and top up feed every 3 days. Survive your bees for the next production season.

Dog Ownership

Dog Ownership

Any person in whose custody, charge or possession or in whose house or premises any dog be found or seen, unless the contrary is provided, be deemed to be the owner of the dog.

Dog License

All dog owners must license their dogs. Dog license is \$13.20 per year paid on yearly basis. Any owner who keeps a dog more than 6 months old without holding a license in respect of such dog shall be guilty of an offence and be liable for conviction or fine.

Dog Licensing Authority

The dog License can be purchased from Agriculture Offices and from SPCA for Suva area. Dog license is valid until 31st of December each year and is not transferable.

Dog owners are required to provide details such as the name, address and description of the dog and number of dogs owned.

Any person(s) who has dog license must produce it on demand to the Inspector or Police Officer. Failure to produce dog

license on demand is an offence and the person shall be liable for conviction or fine.

Collars and Registration labels to be worn by Licensed dogs.

Dog license owners shall at his or her own expense be responsible for affixing a collar with registration label at all times.

Any owner of a dog who fails to comply shall be liable for conviction or fine. Owner liable in Damages for injury by dog The owner of every dog shall be liable in damages for any unprovoked injury done by his or her dog.

Penalty for NOT muzzling dangerous dogs

Any owner who permits a dog which he or she knows to be dangerous or to have injured any person or livestock or any kind of domestic animal without being properly muzzled shall be guilty of an offence and liable for conviction or fine. Any person who sees a dog being at large attacking any person(s) or attacked by such dog may destroy the same without being answerable to the owner of the dog.

Seizure of Stray dogs

Any dog not wearing a collar which is not being in charge or controlled, suffering from disease or neglect may be seized and handed over to the Licensing Officer.

Any dog which has been seized under the provisions of this Act will be detained for 12 daylight hours for Owners to claim with the necessary charges.

Magistrate may order destruction or control of dangerous dog.

If it appears to the Magistrate that such dog is dangerous, he or she may make an order directing either that the dog be destroyed in a manner to cause little pain as possible or it be kept under proper control by the owner.

Important Message:

Ensure to have your dogs licensed as keeping dogs without license is an offence. Dogs to be kept or confined to owners compound with proper feeding and shelter. Proper disposal of household rubbish so that it does not attract dogs. A dog owner must keep a minimum number of dogs that he/she can take care of.

