STATISTICS ON ORGANIC BEEKEEPING IN POLAND



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INTRODUCTION

After the Polish access to the European Union interest in doing business in organic farming has grown from year to year. Proof of this was the increasing number of certification bodies for organic production, including beekeeping. The legislation contained in the Council Regulation (EEC) 2092/91 from 24.06.1991 and the Polish Act on Organic Agriculture from 20.04.2004 have given a foundation for organic beekeeping. There is an experimental organic apiary in the Apiculture Division comprised of 25 bee colonies (with the certificate of conformity). The materials for this study were obtained from the Agricultural and Food Quality Inspection's







Queen cells: material for the new, organic bee colonies

Honey harvest in the organic apiary

RESULTS

Initially, in the years 2004 - 2005 seven certification bodies was founded to reach the number of 11 in 2009. Now, in 2013, there are 10 bodies, from which 9 certify organic beekeeping.

It is known that in 2012 there was about 50 000 of conventional beekeepers in Poland who owned 1 200 000 bee colonies. So on average, one conventional beekeeper had 24 bee colonies and the average honey harvest was about 15 kg per hive. To compare, one organic beekeeper had 63 bee colonies and the honey harvest was only about 12 kg per hive.

Most important statistics of Polish organic beekeeping in years 2009-2012

Year	Number of beekeepers	Number of bee colonies	Honey harvest in total (t)
2009	87	2646	40.33
2010	73	1997	5.83
2011	17	811	12.27
2012	32	2009	24.32
Average	52	1865	20.70

SUMMARY

The progressive drop in the number of bee colonies and beekeepers in 2010 - 2011 was probably caused by the lack of cash subsidies for organic beekeeping in contrast to existing subsidies for ecological agriculture. However, it is interesting that in 2012 the number of beekeepers and organic bee colonies increased without any changes in the subsidies for organic beekeeping. The direct subsidies to purchasing the antivarroa acids (oxalic, formic), that should be used according to the Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007), may be a chance for the organic beekeeping in the next years.

