CHANNELS OF HONEY DISTRIBUTION

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Summary

Poland is self-sufficient with regard to honey supply. In the European Union countries domestic production covers only 50% of the demand, the rest being imported. In Poland, imports account for 15% and exports for 4% of the locally produced honey. There are two principal channels of honey distribution: channel 1 - producer - buyer and channel 2 - producer - wholesale outlet - buyer. Direct purchase from the beekeeper is the simplest system. In Poland, the majority of honey is sold using that system, from 41.9% to 83.6% depending on apiary size. Direct purchase from the beekeeper accounts for 74% of all retail honey sales. This method of purchase is most frequently used by educated middle-aged persons in small towns and villages. Young persons buy honey in shops and elderly people purchase honey on farm markets. On farm markets weight by container of sold honey is greater than in the shops. From 4.7 to 31.7% of apiary-produced honey is sold to wholesale outlets. Most of that honey goes to private retail outlets. There was an increase in the proportion of variety honeys, buckwheat honey and linden honey being most popular.

Keywords: honey, sales, distribution channels.

INTRODUCTION

Honey production in Poland is stable and remains at 9,000 tons/year to 13,000 tons/year. Honey is sold to Polish buyers, small amounts are imported and exported by various firms. Honey is sold wholesale by beekeepers to distributing companies, to retail chains, individually at the beekeeper's or on farm markets. Honey sold wholesale is subject to further distribution. In the European Union countries most honey is sold directly by beekeepers to the consumers as non-standard honey. In the US, 74% of the buying public purchase honey in supermarkets and only 10% buy honey directly from beekeepers (Shenata, Mussen 1985). Ca. 70% is marketed through wholesale outlets, a large part being non-profit supplies to schools, hospitals etc (Ambrose et al. 1992). It is not always that distribution channels are oficially disclosed. It happens in many countries that imported honey is mixed with domestic honey and then re-exported (Pidek 1999).

In Poland, honey distribution surveys were made by Marzec (1996) who queried honey-buing customers in shops. She found that 85% of the residents of Kraków bought honey in shops and 21% bought honey directly from the beekeeper. However, not all distribution channels were surveyed. Linden honey, honeydew honey and mixed--flower honey were in greatest demand.

The objective of this study was to investigate the composition of the distribution channels of Polish-made honey against the distribution in the European Union.

METHODS

The study was performed in central Poland in the years 1991 - 2000 at two stages. As the first stage, 851 beekeepers were queried for data about apiary size, apiary output, sales of variety honeys, proportion of variety honeys in total amount of honey, direct sales to target buyers. The percentage of honey marketed under the beekeeper's own label was also determined. As the second stage, 320 customers of different age were queried for location of honey purchase and for honey quality. The data were compared with the data coming from different EU sources on exports, imports, distribution channels and honey consumption in the EU countries.

RESULTS

Honey distribution channels in the EU countries and in Poland. The EU countries produce 10 times more honey than does Poland (Table 1). Most honey comes from southern Europe and especially from Spain ($^1/_4$ of total European output). The average level of EU self-sufficiency for honey is estimated at 45.0%. The remaining part of honey is imported. Ca. 48% of EU honey imports is by Germany. Twenty percent of Germany honey imports is exported. Self-sufficiency for honey supplies varies from country to country from 0 to 100%. Honey fit for direct consumption (table honey) accounts for 90% of total honey sales in the EU (Report from the Commission to the Council 2000). In the EU countries, 8.8% of honey is used in bakery products and is processed in the course of distribution. Direct sales are dominant, in different countries accounting for 10 to 100% of the produce. From 7 to 50% of honey is marketed through different retail outlets and stores and from 6 to 70% is purchased wholesale by various retailing companies. Poland is practically self-sufficient for honey production. The bulk of Polish-made honey is marketed internally. Imports do not exceed 15% and exports 4% of honey produced in Poland. Because of the unavailability of relevant data it is difficult to estimate to what extent Polish honey is re-exported. It is only a matter of conjecture that a part of imported honey not always of good quality is mixed with Polish honey. Out of six batches of imported honey examined by the Trade Inspection Office (PIH) in 2001 five failed to conform to the Polish Honey Standard PN-88/A--7726 (information on the results of honey quality control test).

Honey distribution channels. Distribution channels are routes by which products arrive at retail outlets (Fig. 1). With regard to honey, the channels can be qualified as narrow since only a small number of wholesale and retail outlets are taking part. However, they meet the basic requirement of good operation in that they make the product available to consumers. A two-step direct sale (producer, consumer) is the simplest channel. A more complicated channel involves the producer, wholesaling, and the consumer. Imported honey passes through the number of channels which is larger still.

Distribution of honey produced in Polish apiaries. In Poland, honey harvest per colony had an increasing tendency over the period of study (Fig. 2). An average annual honey output per colony was from 14.2 to 20.9 kg. The selling system employed varies with apiary size. Beekeepers sell honey using different methods. When selling wholesale they use large containers but also put honey in jars of various size. In such containers they deliver honey to wholesale stores and to retail outlets. Honey packaged for retail sales by the beekeepers usually is not standardized. Nor is honey retailed at the beekeeper's home or in the apiary subject to standardization. In large apiaries the percentage of honey of wholesale sold honey rose to 31.7% (Table 3). In small apiaries it is 4.7%. The largest amounts of honey are purchased wholesale by private companies and by beekeeping cooperatives. A growth in size of an apiary results in the decreased proportion of retail sales from 95.3 to 68.3%, a similar trend being observed in the EU countries. The

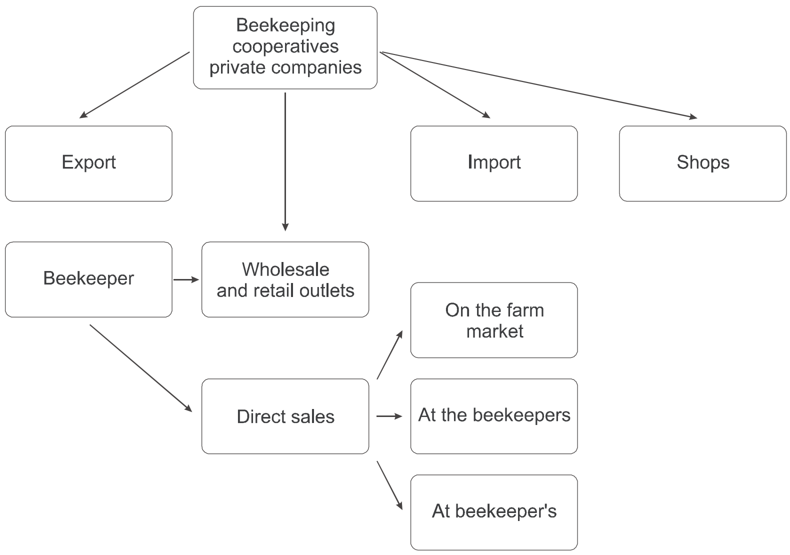

Fig. 1. Honey marketing

proportions of wholesale vs. retail honey sales remain practically at the same level over the last ten years. It is related to the stabilization of apiary size and colony number in Poland, the latter staying around one million. The percentage of wholesale sold honey varied over the years from 10.3 to 24.3% (Fig. 2) being dependent to a large extent on the volume of honey harvest.

Sales of variety honeys. Variety honeys broaden the choice of that product on the market and are sought by consumers. In the 80's variety honey accounted for only 8% of the total amount of honey produced (data from the Central Horticultural and Beekeeping Cooperative CSOiP of 1986). Currently, the average proportion of variety honeys in the total amount of honey is around 30%. The remaining part is mix-flower honey. The amount of variety honeys purchased by consumers steadily increased in the period of study. Buckwheat honey is the most frequently bought variety (11.0%) followed by linden honey (10.3%), accacia honey (5.1%) and honeydew honey (4.3%). Variability of output of honey varieties over the years is considerable being dependent on nectar secretion rate of honeybee pastures.

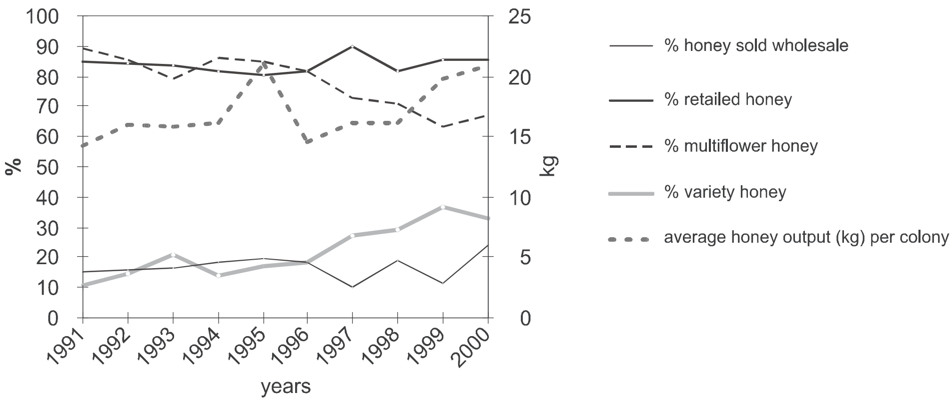

Fig. 2. Honey distribution channels

Table 1

Balance sheet of honey in the EU in the year (without Luxembourg)

Country	Honey production (1000 tons)	Honey imports (1000 tons)	Honey exports (1000 tons)	Honey consumption (1000 tons)	Honey consumption per capita (kg)	Percentage of self-sufficiency
A	8.0	4.0	0.3	11.7	1.4	68.3
B	1.0	8.4	3.3	6.1	0.6	16.4
D	16.0	91.0	18.0	89.0	1.1	18.0
DK	2.0	6.0	2.0	6.0	1.1	33.3
E	33.0	12.0	10.0	35.0	0.9	94.3
EL	15.0	3.1	0.4	17.7	1.7	84.7
F	(28)	13.0	3.0	38.0	0.6	73.7
FIN	1.0	2.0	0.1	2.9	0.6	34.5
I	10.0	13.0	3.0	20.0	0.3	50.0
IRL	0.1	1.3	0.1	1.3	0.4	8.5
NL	0.1	8.0	1.1	7.0	0.4	14.3
P	11.0	1.0	0.3	11.7	1.2	94.0
S	1.0	3.0	0.0	4.0	0.4	25.0
UK	4.0	24.0	1.0	27.0	0.5	14.8
Total Razem	130.2	189.8	42.6	277.4	0.8*	45.0*
PL	13.0	2.0	0.4	14.6	0.38	89.0
Poland’s percentage share in the EU output (%) - Udział Polski na tle Unii (%)						
PL	10.0	1.1	0.9	5.3	47.5	.

* average
Source: statistical data from various sources, some computations done by the author.

Table 2

Honey distribution channels in the EU countries in 2000

Country	Direct to consumers	Retail	Retailing companies	Industry
A	86	8	6	
B	84	16		
DK	44	22	34	
D		90	10	
EL	60		40	
E	23	7	58	12
F	53	7	37	101
FIN	41	29	30	
IRL	10	20	70	
IT		45		
LUX	77	23		
NL	100			
P	30	20	25	25
S	54	21	24	1
UK	28	50	20	2
Average	53.1	27.5	32.2	8.8

Table 3

Distribution of honey produced in Polish apiaries (%)

Apiary size (number of colonies)	Consumption by beekeeper's family	Wholesaling			
		to cooperatives	to private company	to others	Total
1 - 10	8 1.1	-	4.7	-	4.7
11 - 50	7.0	6.2	9.1	4.4	19.7
> 50	5.2	5.6	18.2	7.9	31.7
	6.8	5.9	10.7	6.2	18.7
		Retailing			
		in-house	farm-market	others	Total
1 - 10	8.1	83.6	-	3.6	87.2
11 - 50	7.0	55.2	10.1	8	73.3
> 50	5.2	41.9	12.9	8.3	63.1
	6.8	60.2	11.5	6.6	74.5

Table 4

Some factors influencing purchase of honey at different locations

Item	Percentage share of different locations		
	in the shop	at the beekeepers	on the farm market
Gender:			
female	35.04	51.82	13.14
male	34.62	53.85	11.53
Age			
< 20 yearst	44.44	33.34	22.22
21-40 years	33.66	51.92	14.42
41-60 years	34.95	53.40	11.65
> 60 years	12.50	37.50	50.00
Education:			
primary	30.00	20.00	50.00
secondary	36.67	50.00	13.33
higher	31.58	64.91	3.51
Locality:			
village	34.37	53.13	12.50
town	29.48	56.07	14.45
settlement	25.00	75.00	
Annual per capita honey consumption (kg)			
< 10	37.31	44.78	17.91
10-30	35.82	52.24	11.94
30-50	35.85	54.72	9.43
> 50	24.00	68.00	8.00

Item	Percentage share of different locations		
	in the shop	at the beekeepers	on the farm market
Consistency of purchased honey			
liquid	34.43	53.55	12.02
creamy (crystallised)	29.41	52.94	17.65
Frequency of honey consumption			
every day	43.75	43.75	12.50
once in a week	23.29	63.01	13.70
once in a month	40.63	50.00	9.37
less frequently	39.71	44.12	16.17

Honey retailing locations. Honey is retailed in shops, on farm markets and at the beekeeper's apiary. Regardless of gender, half of the surveyed population bought honey at the beekeeper's. Most frequently, they were middle-aged persons. Younger persons bought honey in shops and the elderly purchased it on farm markets. The clientele of farm markets consisted mostly of less educated persons. Persons with higher education bought honey at the beekeeper's. That was also a preferred purchase location for small town dwellers who consumed much honey. Purchases in the shop were usually made by young people with secondary education who were rare honey buyers. Weight by container of the honey retailed in shops was ussually in line with customers' preferences and was mostly 250 g, 400 g, 500 g and 1300 g. In direct sales the containers are larger.

CONCLUSIONS

As in the European Union, Poland's honey distribution channels are complex.

Poland has the highest degree of honey self-sufficiency as Spain and Portugal among the EU countries.

As in the EU countries, direct purchase of honey from the beekeeper prevails in Poland.

Wholesale sold honey comes mostly from commercial apiaries.

Production and distribution of honey has been stable for the last 10 years.

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KANAŁY DYSTRYBUCJI MIODU

P i d e k A .

S t r e s z c z e n i e

Badania prowadzono w centralnej Polsce w latach 1991-2000 u 851 pszczelarzy i 320 konsumentów. Celem badań była analiza kanałów dystrybucji miodu w Polsce i próba ich naświetlenia na tle krajów europejskiej. Polska w odróżnieniu od krajów Unii Europejskiej (UE) jest prawie samowystarczalna w zakresie zaopatrzenia w miód. Import stanowi 15% a eksport 4% miodu wyprodukowanego. Średnia roczna produkcja w Polsce wynosi 13 tys. ton miodu, natomiast w UE jest dziesięciokrotnie większa i wynosi 130 tys. ton. 85% importowanego do UE miodu stanowi miód konsumpcyjny a pozostałe 15% używane jest do przetwarzania. Najprostszą metodą dystrybucji miodu zarówno w Polsce jak i w krajach UE jest sprzedaż przez pszczelarza miodu bezpośrednio konsumentowi. W ten sposób sprzedawne jest od 41,9 % do 83,6% miodu w zależności od wielkości pasieki. Bardziej skomplikowanym systemem dystrybucji jest sprzedaż według modelu producent-hurtownia-sklep-konsument. Sprzedaż miodu przez pszczelarza jest jedną z metod sprzedaży detalicznej i może odbywać się w domu, na targu lub w innym miejscu. Detalicznie sprzedawane jest 68,3% miodu w pasiekach dużych do 95,3 % w pasiekach małych, średnio 74 %. Hurtowo sprzedawano od 4,7% do 31,7%. Procentowy udział miodu sprzedawanego w hurcie w ostatnim dziesięcioleciu zmienił się w niewielkim zakresie. Około 30% sprzedawanego miodu stanowi miód odmianowy w którym dominuje miód gryczany 11,0%, lipowy 10,3%, akacjowy 5,1% i spadziowy 5,3%. Preferencje konsumentów odnośnie miejsca zakupu miodu zależą od płci, wieku, wykształcenia i zamieszkania. Miód od pszczelarza kupowały przede wszystkim osoby z wykształceniem wyższym będące w wieku średnim. Osoby młodsze kupowały przede wszystkim miód w sklepie, a starsze na targu. U pszczelarza kupowały miód również te osoby które spożywały go dużo.

Słowa kluczowe: miód, sprzedaż, kanały dystrybucji.