



Initiative for:

The European **HONEY** Breakfast and **World Bee Day**



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1 Introduction



Slovenian apiary



Beehive panel

In 2006 the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association started a charitable educational campaign in kindergartens and schools called "Slovenian Beekeepers' Honey for Breakfast in Kindergartens and Schools", with the aim of making our children aware of the importance of bees and beekeeping.

This campaign has exceeded all our expectations, since its results are excellent (responses are described in this booklet). Above all, children and indirectly all of the Slovenian public had a chance to thoroughly get to know everything about Slovenian beekeeping, the importance of bees, and the importance of the consumption of bee products. It is also important that through this campaign the consumption of Slovenian bee products in Slovenia has significantly increased.

By introducing the European Honey for Breakfast, the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association would like to transfer to other countries this good practice, because we believe that good things should be shared.

Boštjan Noč,
President of BAS

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food recognizes the importance of bees and beekeeping for ensuring food security, as well as preserving the entire ecosystem and natural biodiversity. Therefore, we strive to preserve and protect the bees in our territory and throughout the European Union.

As part of these efforts, public awareness plays an important role and we attach great importance to young people. Therefore, from the very beginning we have participated in the educational promotional campaign launched by the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association in 2006. Over the years, this project has also included other ministries, while its implementation has spread from educational institutions to other state and public institutions. On the basis of good practice carried out in Slovenia, Slovenia took the initiative to launch the European Honey Breakfast in March 2014 at the Agriculture and Fisheries Council in Brussels. The initiative was warmly welcomed by many ministers and the former Commissioner of Agriculture. Beside the EU Member States, candidate countries for accession to the EU and third countries have also shown an interest in participating. We are particularly pleased that some countries even started the implementation of the project in 2014, in the neighbouring Hungary for example, where they had the European Honey Breakfast in 67 elementary schools on the same day as in Slovenia. This year, our activities will be further upgraded, because I am convinced that together we can do more to promote bees and beekeeping, as well as bee products.

In recent years, at the international level and due to its international activities related to bees and beekeeping, Slovenia has been identified as a country where this field has a special place and receives special care, the Slovenian Government has decided to further upgrade these activities and, at the initiative of Slovenian Beekeepers' Association, to submit a proposal for the proclamation of World Bee Day within the framework of the United Nations. Together with the Beekeepers' Association and other institutions, the Government will strive for the proclamation of this day, which will further contribute to the awareness of the importance of bees and beekeeping.

Dejan Židan, MSc,
Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister of Agriculture,
Forestry and Food

2 Presentation of the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association and Slovenian apiculture

In Slovenia, beekeeping is a traditional agricultural activity. More than 230 years ago, the knowledge of the Slovenian small country farmer/beekeeper was made public by Anton Janša (1734-1773), the first teacher of beekeeping in imperial Vienna. A hundred years later, the area became renowned for its bee (*Apis mellifera carnica*), which soon became known around the world.

In recent years, beekeeping has been constantly gaining in importance as a full-fledged agricultural activity. In



Apis mellifera carnica

the pre-accession negotiations for joining the EU, Slovenia secured the option to regulate, via national legislation, the method for marketing bee breeding material, thus enforcing the protection of the indigenous Carniolan bee. In 1879, Pollmann described and named the bees he found in Carniola as the subspecies *Apis mellifera carnica*, also called "kranjska čebela", "Carniolan bee" and "Krainger Biene". Today's territory of Slovenia is home to the race of grey bees – the Carniolan bee (*Apis mellifera carnica*).

Beekeeping has a long-standing tradition in Slovenia, which is why it does not come as a surprise that it has left traces in folk art. Painted beehive panels are a valued decoration of beehives in Slovenia and apiaries have become a typical architectural



Beehives painted with the motif of Peter Pavel Glavar and Anton Janša

feature in the Slovenian rural architectural style, ennobling the cultural profile of the country's landscape with their appearance even today.

The Slovenian Beekeepers' Association is a non-profit professional organisation founded by beekeeping societies in 1873 in order to pursue common interests. Today, the Association has 207 (two hundred and seven) beekeeping societies and 14 (fourteen) regional beekeeping associations. The Association has a total of 7,750 (seven thousand seven hundred and fifty) members – beekeepers from all across Slovenia. Since 2002 the headquarters of the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association has been at Brdo pri Lukovici – the building is owned by the Slovenian beekeepers – members of the Association. Slovenian beekeepers place a great deal of emphasis on recognisability and a majority of beekeeping societies and associations have their own banners. Slovenian beekeepers have their own beekeeping suits and, last but not least, are all united by the beekeeping anthem. The beekeeping holiday is celebrated every year on 20 May, the birth date of Anton Janša.



The Beekeeping Centre of Slovenia



Flag-bearers of the beekeeping societies in the background and the beekeeping holiday

According to the central register of apiaries, on 15th April 2014 there were 10,145 beekeepers in Slovenia with 13,164 hives or hive stands, and an estimated 176,995 bee colonies. Slovenia is also developing ecological beekeeping. According to data from the register of apiaries, the av-

average age of beekeepers is 58 years. According to the central register of the apiaries, about 70% of beekeepers have less than 20 bee colonies, on average only 17. The data shows that the majority of beekeepers are involved in beekeeping in their spare time as a hobby business, while professional beekeepers are limited. The prevailing method of beekeeping is beekeeping in Alberti-Žnideršič hives (hereinafter: AŽ-hives), which provide homes for 92% of bee colonies.

The Janez Goličnik specialist library operates within the framework of the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association and is housed in the Beekeeping Centre at Brdo pri Lukovici. The library offers over 3,000 units of specialist beekeeping literature that we



The Slovenski čebelar (Slovenian beekeeper) newsletter

use to train beekeepers and inform the general public. The Slovenian Beekeepers' Association has been regularly publishing the *Slovenski čebelar* (Slovenian Beekeeper) specialist magazine for over a century (since 1898) and its bound volumes are extremely valuable.

One of the chief tasks of the Association is educating, training and improving beekeepers (IZUIZ); these tasks can take many different forms. In recent years, the Association has



The Janez Goličnik Beekeeping Library



Terminological dictionary

published a large amount of educational materials. The Terminological Dictionary containing over 3,000 terms has been translated into English and represents a very special milestone.

Beekeepers and the general public can benefit from the services provided by the Public Advisory Service on beekeeping and the Observation and Forecasting Service, which are performed by the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association. The latter also has the status of a Recognized beekeepers' association for the Carniolan bee.



The Slovenian honey jar



Beekeeper training

In recent years, special emphasis has been placed on promoting Slovenian honey and other bee products. In 2013, we protected "Slovenian honey with a protected geographical indication" at the European level. (Slovenian honey with a protected appellation of origin).



Participation at fairs



Promotional – education material

We carry out numerous promotional campaigns such as attending fairs, organising “Honey Days”, the “open house” week for kindergartens and primary schools, we give honey to all children in kindergartens for breakfast free-of-charge once per year, etc.



Beekeeping Tourism Tigeli

We have intensified our efforts in the field of beekeeping tourism. Our beekeeping is famous around the world for its features, which are noteworthy for their uniqueness, among other things (painted beehives, apiary architecture that cannot be seen elsewhere, a diverse range of bee products and honey-based products, interesting characters from Slovenian beekeeping history).

Several years ago, the management of the Slovenian Beekeepers’ Association decided to be among the first in the world to start developing beekeeping tourism in an organised way. We have founded a special commission and invited all beekeepers willing to open their home to visitors to participate. Many beekeeping educational paths have been opened across Slovenia recently with the aim of educating and presenting beekeeping to the general public and to enrich the tourism of the individual areas.

3 Presentation of the Honey Breakfast project in Slovenia and initiatives for the proclamation of the European Honey Breakfast



Honey corner at the Traditional Slovenian Breakfast – children making honey cookies

Bee table settings created by children in the kindergarten



Learning corner in the kindergarten, intended for learning about traditional foods, which include honey



Beehive created under the children's diligent hands

Children at the Honey Breakfast, while listening to the beekeeper and visiting the Carniolan bees

On the third Friday of November each year, Slovenian beekeepers organise an educational and promotional campaign for preschool and school children simply called the Honey Breakfast. In Slovenia, the Honey Breakfast has been supported for all these years by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. The campaign has been carried out by regional beekeepers' associations and beekeepers under the auspices of the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association since 2007. On this day, preschool and school children are treated to a breakfast of Slovenian



Example of cooperation at the TSB – Mayor, headmistress, beekeepers, teachers, children

honey collected and mostly donated by beekeepers. Each year, an educational publication on the topic of beekeeping (brochures, worksheets, online interactive content) is issued for this purpose and distributed or made available to children. In addition to beekeepers, the Honey Breakfast is attended by mayors, state officials, athletes, heads of nursery and primary schools and others. After breakfast, presentations and workshops on the topic of beekeeping are held for children by beekeepers in cooperation with the teachers. The Slovenian Beekeepers' Association informs the public about the event



Learning English while learning about beehives - Ob Dravinji Primary School



Children's drawings about beekeeping



Drawing, created by a kindergarten pupil



Beehive, created and painted by children



through various media. The honey breakfast is supported by national and regional TV networks, radio stations and newspapers that report on the event free of charge and help raise the general public's awareness of the importance of beekeeping. In 2011, the Honey Breakfast was promoted to the Traditional Slovenian Breakfast and the Day of Slovenian food.

Why did beekeepers decide to unite and organise this campaign? We are aware that most habits are formed in childhood and it is therefore necessary to begin teaching children about the importance of caring for the environment and nature as early as possible. The results of the campaign indicate that we have been successful since children, teachers and the general public have shown a positive attitude to bees and nature,



On the Honey Breakfast day, children decorate the kindergarten's learning corners with beekeeping content

the number of children participating in beekeeping clubs in schools is growing and there are more and more young beekeepers, the sale and consumption of honey and other bee products have increased, etc.

Having been so successful in our endeavours to promote intergenerational cooperation, charitableness, the transfer of knowledge from older to younger generations, cooperation between teachers in charge of children's education and upbringing and beekeepers who share their expertise with them, we wished to share our success with the whole of Europe.

The objective of the European Honey Breakfast is to increase public awareness on:

- The importance of bees and bee products,
- A healthy lifestyle,
- The importance of locally grown food.

The Slovenian Beekeepers' Association presented the initiative to expand the project outside the borders of our country and name it the European Honey Breakfast to the representatives of foreign beekeepers' associations. In November 2014, the initiative was presented to the representatives of foreign beekeepers' associations participating



With the support of the teacher or the beekeeper, the children create products made of beeswax

The representatives of foreign beekeepers' associations who, on 3rd November 2014, attended the 3rd International Conference of beekeepers' associations and the Honey or Traditional Breakfast in schools and kindergartens in Slovenia, have shared their impressions on the attendance of the Breakfast with us.

Impressions from the conference have been overwhelmingly positive. What is even more important is that the topics were useful for beekeepers in Montenegro.

As regards the Honey Breakfast, I can say that we intended to carry out a similar campaign in Montenegro, which is why it meant so much to me to have been able to take part in this event during my stay in Slovenia.

I hope that we are able to implement a similar project soon. Realising the importance of the promotion of beekeeping among the youngest, we organised lectures with the ministry of agriculture a few days ago at schools in all the municipalities of Montenegro. We organised lectures for children in the fourth grade of primary school and presented beekeeping basics to them. We entitled the project The Bee and Honey.

The experience we gained in Slovenia has certainly contributed to the higher quality of the lectures.

We congratulate you on a well-organised conference.

Radule Miljanić,
President of the Association of
Beekeeping Organisations of
Montenegro

Not long ago (21 November 2014), I had the opportunity to experience the implementation of the Traditional Slovenian Breakfast Made from Homemade Products. The basic idea behind the project is highly appro-

priate for communicating the benefit of bees for nature and humans. Bee products can be used in many different ways; not only as a natural raw material, but also for other purposes such as pastries, wax candles, etc.

A visit to the Kindergarten in Slovenske Konjice

With numerous children divided into groups, the atmosphere at the kindergarten was truly lively.

Teachers were well-prepared for our visit.

The hosts presented themselves with a song and surprised us with stands laden with homemade delicacies.



When our visit that filled us with positive impressions came to a close, we were presented with homemade delicacies and the *Čebela Špela* (*Špela the Bee*) leaflet featuring children's drawings.

This was followed by a report on the meeting on the Traditional Joint Breakfast. The city mayor, the headmaster of the kindergarten and the teachers proudly reported on the events that took place during the meeting and identified the traditional gathering with a joint breakfast as a successful project.

A visit to the Ob Dravi Primary School, Slovenske Konjice

We were greeted in the lobby of the school by the headmaster and a group of students. It was with great pride that they showed us the school's beekeeping exhibition space, which featured a stand with bee products. We then had breakfast in a classroom. We enjoyed a joint meal with homemade products. After breakfast, we discussed the topic of bees-nature-humans. We also talked about how to instil an awareness of

the importance of these issues in children.

We would like to express our deep gratitude to the board of the local beekeeping association in Slovenske Konjice under the leadership of Stane Kokelj, whose efforts in the organisation and implementation of the two projects was outstanding.

Valentin Blantar,
President of the Völkermarkt
Beekeeping Association, Austria

The visits to a kindergarten and two primary schools served as practical examples to children to demonstrate how these institutions (Radeče) pass on the principle that we live with nature and off nature's resources and should therefore treat them carefully, setting an example.

One could feel this positive attitude in everything presented by the children.

The Slovenian Beekeepers' Association organised the event perfectly and deserves every acknowledgement.

Thank you very much!

Meinhard Schöffmann
Chairman
National Beekeepers' Association
in Carinthia

It was a pleasure for me and the president of the Slovak Beekeepers Association, Mr. Ludovit Gal, to join the Honey Breakfast in the Gornja Radgona kindergarten. The Slovak Beekeepers Association members have started supplying schools and foster homes with local honey in recent years, but this initiative was only local in scale. Next year we would like to give this initiative a nationwide dimension. We hope that on the next third Friday of November, there will be at least twice as many children in central Europe who will taste „Slovenski med“, because in our country we speak of our honey using the same term (one letter is written differently,

but it sounds the same): Slovensky med. Based on Slovenia's good practices, we in Slovakia strongly support an initiative to establish a European Honey Breakfast campaign, which is not only about healthy nutrition, but subsequently also about the conservation of bees, the good state of the environment and biodiversity. Our visit to the Slovenian kindergarten was not only sweet to the tongue, but the children also delighted our eyes with a nice program and finally we indulged our stomachs with a healthy breakfast in a peaceful and stress-free atmosphere. Thank you.

Robert Chlebo and Ludovit Gal,
Slovakia.

The Honey Breakfast that I attended at the school in Dolenjske Toplice was a very interesting event.

As I mentioned in the short address I gave, I encouraged the children to follow that initiative since it is good for their health and will enable them to stay healthy and have an active life.

I particularly enjoyed the social dimension of the event and the fact that children of different ages could share it together. It was also interesting to notice the enthusiastic commitment of the headmistress and the teachers in supporting and organising the event on the one hand, and on the other the keen involvement of the students in preparing and offering a wide range

of natural products with honey among the most prominent ingredients.

I was also told by one of the teachers that this initiative also resulted in an important outcome – ensuring that all the students have the good habit of a regular and healthy breakfast in the early part of the day at school, which has a positive effect on their learning performance as well.

Certainly an excellent initiative to support for all those involved in beekeeping since young people are the customers (and, who knows, maybe also the beekeepers) of the future!

Riccardo Jannoni-Sebastianini
Apimondia Secretary-General

It was an honour and a pleasure to be part of the 3rd International Conference of Beekeeping Organisations in Slovenia. We enjoyed your very professional programme, your high level of organisation and great working atmosphere.

We learned a lot about your vision of beekeeping, the strength of your educational programmes and the struggles and problems of beekeeping. We are also pleased to be part of that international cooperation. We were

enchanted with the children's programme during the Honey Breakfast and their positive reactions, and we are looking forward to being part of it.

You can be sure that we will follow and support you in all your future projects, especially in spreading the Honey Breakfast throughout Europe.

Mr.sc Kristijan Jusić
Vice President of Pčelinjak
Beekeepers Association, Zagreb



**5 The
initiative
for a World
Bee Day**

Bees play an extremely important role in nature. There would be no food or human life without bees. Because we are aware of their importance, we wish to submit an application to the United Nations for declaring an official WORLD BEE DAY.

We suggest proclaiming it on May 20, as this is the birthday of Anton Janša, the pioneer of modern apiculture.



Anton Janša

Why are bees so important? (From the professional magazine Slovenian Beekeeper by Danilo Bevk)

We usually only realize the importance and value of something when it is gone. The same goes for polli-

nation. It has always been taken for granted, which is why it has never received any special attention or care. It was only after a decrease in agricultural production was evidenced due to a lack of pollination in some parts of the world that it became clear we are talking about a gift of nature that should not be taken for granted. The massive death of bee colonies largely contributed to the phenomenon dubbed "the pollination crisis" due to the lack of pollinators. Pollination is the transfer of pollen from the stamens to the pistil of the same or different plants. We differentiate between insect-pollinated flowers and wind-pollinated flowers. The honeybee is considered the most important pollinator; however, other insects such as the solitary bees and bumblebees should not be ignored. Pollination is extremely important for agriculture. The dependency of crops on insect pollination can differ. Wind-pollinated flowers such as cereals do not need bees in order to pollinate. Even insect-pollinated flowers can be self-pollinated and can therefore flourish without pollinators, but their harvest is bigger

and better when pollinated by insects. Those plants that can't self-pollinate are the ones most dependent on pollinators. They can only be pollinated by other pollen derived plants, for which pollinators are necessary.

In Europe, 84% of cultivated plants are dependent on insect pollination. Worldwide, 70% of the plant species used for food depend on this kind of pollination.

In terms of quantity, approximately one third of all the food we eat depends on insects for pollination. Nowadays, we have a strong tendency to evaluate everything, which is why the economic value of pollination has been repeatedly addressed. A few years ago, a group of French and German scientists conducted research to answer to this difficult question (Gallai et al. 2008).

The value of pollination is significantly greater than the value of bee products. In 2005, the economic value of insect pollination was estimated at **153 billion euros** world-

wide. Allow me to briefly explain how they arrived at with this amount. They assumed that the value of the pollination is equal to the value of the reduced crop production that would occur without the pollinators. This was calculated by collecting data on the quantity of produced crops and the dependency of these plants on insect pollination. On this basis, they could calculate the estimated production value with non-existent pollinators. The estimated production without pollinators is then subtracted from the actual production, thus determining the above-mentioned value of pollination.

The total value of crops was estimated at 1.618 trillion, of which the value of the crop plants pollinated by insects was estimated at 625 billion. Considering that many of them can be at least partially pollinated without insects, the value of pollination is set at 153 billion euros. The pollination of fruits and vegetables is estimated at 50 billion each and therefore stands out as the most valuable. This, however, is not a complete assessment. Only crops that are

used for human consumption were taken into account and therefore the total value of pollination in agriculture is even greater. The estimation does not include the pollination of forage plants, the pollination needed for seed production and the pollination of plants that are used for biofuel production. It also does not include the very important value of pollination in nature. It is difficult to assess the accuracy of these estimations. But even without taking the numbers into account, it's easy to understand the priceless value of pollination for mankind and the urgent need to protect it.

In intensively farmed agricultural areas where the need for pollination is large and "wild pollinators" are most scarce, beekeeping is of especially great importance for agricultural production. Unfortunately, raising awareness on this topic is difficult because the bees' needs are

often not taken into consideration in farming. Their needs should be met throughout the year, not only in the flowering season, because that is the only way they can effectively carry out their mission as pollinators.

As stated by the famous Albert Einstein: "If the bee disappeared from the surface of the earth, man would have no more than four years to live. No more bees, no more pollination, no more plants, no more animals, no more man."

On 2 April 2015, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia welcomed the initiative of the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association to proclaim the World Bee Day at the United Nations Organisation.

We hope that the initiative will be joined by numerous beekeepers' association and countries around the world.

Boštjan Noč,
President of the SBA



Slovenian apiaries



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