

How SA honey production could see R20bn turnover

A structural approach and strategic business model could see South Africa's honey industry turnover reach R20bn, according to experts.



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Rishad Ahmed, project funding expert and specialist from Incentives SA said the inclusion of various industry stakeholders in a combined effort could aid in the growth of the industry. The local honey industry currently sees an average annual turnover of R3.2bn, producing 2,000 tonnes per annum, according to the South African Biodiversity Institute. Ahmed, however, believes these numbers could drastically increase, given a proper business model and investments made.

"Various stakeholders need to be involved to ensure projects such as this one take off. Projects need to be packaged and project managers need to engage with the stakeholders and those in the industry to join the dots in the honey productions industry," Ahmed told Fin24.

However, Ahmed said there were numerous factors that needed to be considered and which affected the honey industry locally.

Shortage of beekeepers

Since 1980 there has been a massive decline in the number of South African beekeepers, according to SA Honeybee Foundation's Dominique Marchand. "South Africa has never had any formal training schools, unlike the majority of countries with a strong commercial farming output. Even Tanzania, Kenya and Ethiopia have them," Marchand said.

"There has been a shortage of beekeepers, down from 25,000 in 1980 to less than 2,000 in 2017," Marchand told Fin24.

Buy local

Ahmed told Fin24 another issue plaguing the industry was that many retailers were not retailing honey from local suppliers. "Much of the honey we buy from local retailers is supplied by international companies. Local retailers need to partner with local bee farms to ensure aid in the growth of the honey production industry," he said.

Exterminations

Ahmed told Fin24 the local honey bee population was dwindling due to the extermination of the insects.

"It is barbaric to kill species by terminating them. The more bee hives we keep, the more we can collect honey and be able to process honey and supply a larger amount," he said.

Unifying sectors

Key to the growth of the industry is to seek investment from government, the private sector and abroad, according to Ahmed.

This week, the Norwegian-African Business Association (NABA), which seeks to promote business opportunities in Africa and serve as a bridge between Norwegian and African business communities, will host its annual conference. Ahmed will attend.

"It is opportunities like these that South Africa, and projects like growing the bee population for a higher yield in the production of honey, can benefit from," Ahmed said.

Source: Fin24

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