



Bee Prepared – Saint Lucia Moves Closer To Exporting Local Honey

By **Editorial Staff**

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Saint Lucian beekeepers are one step closer to exporting locally produced honey following the final round of consultations under the Bee City Cluster Project.

Initiated in 2019, the Bee City Cluster Project intends to improve the production of Saint Lucian honey with the aim of increasing honey exports.

Implemented by Export Saint Lucia and funded by the Inter-Development Bank (IDB) Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility, the project will breathe new life into the island's apiculture industry.

A knowledge exchange session in May 2023 was the project's final component. This included two objectives, the first being to assess the apiaries including the beekeeping practices and hive management, towards increasing their productive capacity; and to provide practical and theoretical training to the Ministry of Agriculture Apiculture extension officers.

"The mandate of Export Saint Lucia is to increase exports, in some cases by creating the environment which will lead towards that goal. While we are aware of the high quality and high value of our honey, at this juncture we are not producing enough to meet local and international demand. To do this and eventually service the export markets, we must increase, even double, production. This is why the knowledge exchange component of the project is critical. We also wanted to ensure that the extension officers were equipped to advise the beekeepers and keep the momentum of the consultancy towards our final goal", shared Sunita Daniel, Chief Executive Officer of Export Saint Lucia.

Christopher Davey, an international apiculture consultant, joined representatives of Export Saint Lucia and the Ministry of Agriculture for a series of site visits to beehives across the island.

He was tasked with assessing ways to not only increase production but to train some of the extension officers for the sub-sector on everyday beekeeping best practices. *"From my observations, there are a lot of little things that beekeepers can do to improve their production. The industry is very lucrative here in terms of the cost of honey, and this means that there is a big opportunity for younger people to enter the industry, double the number of hives in Saint Lucia, and subsequently double the amount of honey produced in Saint Lucia",* noted Davey.

The Government of Saint Lucia, in the 2023/2024 budget estimates, has allocated three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) to the development of Saint Lucia's sea moss and apiculture industries.

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prospects and anticipated successes of the industry are sustained.

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