

Apimedita&Apiquality Forum 2010 was held in Slovenia

One of the reasons for organising an Apimondia event with motto "Keeping Healthy through Bees" by Slovenian Beekeeping Association is the fact that Dr. Filip Terč (1844 -1917), a doctor and beekeeper from Maribor, who successfully cured during his life 543 out of his 658 of patients suffering from rheumatic diseases, is considered the father of modern apitherapy. For several years, his birthday, 30 March, has been celebrated as World Apitherapy Day.

Apimondia Forum took place from 28 to 2 October in Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia, but some satellite Symposia also in 4 smaller locations in different parts of the country in order to activate local beekeepers. Parallel to plenary sessions and symposia in Ljubljana an API-Expo exhibition has been organised with 42 exhibitors from 8 countries.

The total number of participants on forum is 200 from 39 different countries. 69 participants had oral presentations and 45 only poster.

Here are the main topics:

1. **Bee product quality:** focussing on organic production, standards and legislation and local trademarks on global market.
2. **Beekeeping technology:** focussing on technology for higher quality honeybee products, especially for medical use , as well as quality control practice.
3. **Honey bee products in human nutrition and personal care:** focusing on the practice in child nutrition, elderly and special activity groups of the population.
4. **Honey bee products in animal nutrition and health care:** focussing on horse nutrition and health.
5. **Honey bee products for human health care:** focussing on rheumatology and wound care.

It is difficult to describe in this short report all the results of the scientific researches presented on this forum. There was a pleasant surprise to listen to the younger Slovenian scientists who discovered a very high antibacterial activity of Slovenian honeys against selected species of oral bacterial flora. Many studies on antimicrobial properties of honey have been conducted, with emphasis on bacteria isolated from chronic wounds. It was proven that its antibacterial properties enhance epithelization and improve wound healing. Honey is not efficient only in wound therapy, but also shows positive action on oral mucosa. Bacteria, which present anaerobic oral flora, are often implicated in periodontal diseases.

The prevalence of periodontitis and other periodontal diseases have recently increased. Treatment sometimes includes the use of antibiotics to help control bacterial infection. The aim of a study made by scientists from the Institute of Microbiology and Immunology, Faculty of Medicine Ljubljana, was to evaluate the antibacterial properties of different Slovenian floral honey samples on normal bacterial oral flora and periodontopathogenic bacteria. The minimum inhibitory

concentration of the honeys was assessed for obligate anaerobe (*Actinobacillus actinomycetemcomitans*, *Bacteroides* spp., *Capnocytophaga* spp., *Porphyromonas gingivalis*, *Prevotella intermedia*, *Prevotella buccalis*, *Prevotella oris*, *Prevotella veroralis*, *Fusobacterium nucleatum*, *Eikenella corrodens*) and facultative anaerobe (*Streptococcus mutans*, *S. salivarius*, *S. sanguis*, *S. oralis*), by agar-diffusion method. Dilutions with concentration of honey ranging from 10-100 % (v/v) were used. All types of undiluted Slovenian honeys inhibited the growth of obligate anaerobes. In the case of *S. salivarius* and *S. mutans* there was little or no evidence of growth inhibition at 100 % concentration of acacia and lime-tree honey. *S. sanguis* and *S. oralis* appear to be more sensitive species and were inhibited by all honey samples used at concentration 100 % and 50 %, however flower and rape honey were the most efficient. Particularly high efficiency showed rape honey also on obligate anaerobes. The results prove that Slovenian honeys have efficient bacteriostatic properties on anaerobic bacteria.

We hope that Slovenian chestnut honey will be recognised as a medical honey until the end of this year.

Similar to in other developed countries, official medical science in Slovenia looks upon apitherapy with distrust and keeps its distance. The greatest reproach that some doctors make is that healing substances in bee products are not standardised and they change from year to year and from one place to the other. This is very true. Each Aspirin Plus C tablet contains exactly 400mg of acetylsalicylic acid and 240mg of ascorbic acid or vitamin C, regardless of whether it was manufactured in Germany or anywhere else, this year or five years from now. Fresh willow pollen contains both of these active ingredients and current observations show that it has more beneficial effects for people than Aspirin, but each year, the quantity of these two important components differs. And this is why such pollen cannot be recognised as a drug.

It is interesting that official medical science recognises immense power in pollen and bee venom. The first can confine a person with allergies to bed and incapacitate him for weeks. A single bee sting can kill every two hundredth resident of Slovenia who is allergic if medical care is not received on time. But beekeepers know that both pollen and bee products can help prevent or even treat various diseases, as previously stated. Most doctors do not see this, do not know it or refuse to learn about it. Perhaps some of them who attended our forum will change their minds. This is why we have invited the best experts to hold lectures, as they will present strong scientific evidence of the usefulness of bees for our health.

Franc Sivic

Vice president of Slovenian Beekeepers Association