HIVE COLONISATION

Summary

Hive Colonisation has remained an area of concern to most bee farmers in all parts in Uganda.

Low hive Colonisation in Uganda may be attributed to poor hive standard, invasion of the hive by pest before the bee colony, low bee population, poor hive siting, lack of hive baiting, construction of hives with timbers from trees that repel bees and others.

However, hive Colonisation can be improved by:- baiting the hives before siting, catching of swarms, purchase of bee colonies, siting the hives in a conducive environment for bees (plenty of flowers, natural flowing water source and shade), division of existing bee colonies and collecting wild colonies as discussed.

NB:-Not every bee colony is productive until the performance is evaluate in term of honey productivity , strength, aggressiveness and Abscondment



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INCREASING HIVE COLONISATION



INTRODUCTION

Having many hives colonized in the apiary is every beekeepers wish because the more hives colonized the more the honey and other hive products harvested. Nevertheless, many farmers are faced with the challenge of having all or most of the hives in the apiary colonized. This is because it requires some skill, labour, courage and time to achieve it.

The information contained in this brochure gives the beekeeper a brief on the several skills and techniques than can be used to multiply the colonies (increasing the rate of hive colonisation

Increasing Hive Colonisation

How to increase hive Colonisation

1.Baiting

Bating is the application of attractants (baits) in the bee hive. The baits include:-

- Melted beeswax
- Propolis
- Honey
- Lemon grass extract

2.Division of strong colonies



Cleaning and baiting hives

Colonies of desirable traits can be divided to increase the number of colonies in an apiary. Such colonies should be selected from those with high honey productivity, high reproductive nature, resistance to pests and diseases and not have the absconding behavior. Select some brood combs and some honey combs from a colonized hive and place them into an empty hive. The combs must have some adult bees on them.



A brood comb from a good colony for division



A bee house/shed with colonized hives using several methods

3.Swarm catching

Swarming is a condition by which a colony divides and one group remains in the original hive and the other goes away. Catching of swarms can be achieved by:-

- Siting catcher boxes/empty hives during a swarming season.
- Collecting of bee swarms that are nesting in a tree.
- Shaking bees clustering or hanging on a branch or any object into a catcher box or hive.

4.Collecting wild Colonies

Honey bee colonies nesting in anthills, truck of trees and hollow logs can be collected and housed in the bee hives.

5.Purchase of bee colonies

Farmers especially starters can colonies their bee hives by purchasing bee colonies from other farmers or commercial beekeepers from within their locality or even abroad.

When purchasing bee colonies the following should be considered:-

- Colony strength
- Honey productivity
- Pest/ disease infestation
- History of the queen
- Absconding behaviors