



Eva Crane Trust

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THE INTERNATIONAL BEE RESEARCH ASSOCIATION (IBRA)

by Eva Crane

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BACKGROUND OF IBRA

Bees and beekeeping seem to fall outside most categories of endeavour: bees are not usually counted among livestock; they are not a crop, although products harvested from them (honey and pollen) are of plant origin. The economic value of bees in crop pollination is at least 20 times as great as the value of products harvested from hives. But the end-users of information about apiculture are beekeepers, not the crop growers who obtain the greatest benefit from the presence of bees.

Beekeeping is possibly more widely distributed than almost any other agricultural activity, and is practised in virtually every country of the world. It can be done by young and old, by men and women, and at all occupational levels, from a Third World peasant farmer with a few hives free for the making, adding to his family's food supply, to a highly mechanized 50 000 hive enterprise in the USA.

The diversity among the end-users of information is certainly a challenge to IBRA, the specialized information analysis centre concerned. There is a wide range of language, educational level, sophistication of technology, and also of bees, climate and vegetation, and outlet for bee products. This diversity can, however, be a hindrance to obtaining appropriate funding, because there is no single lobby that has sufficient financial strength. And the greatest beneficiaries, the growers, usually do not recognize that they have a financial responsibility for the insects that pollinate their crops.

Work with apiculture carries with it one benefit that partly offsets its anomalous position. Beekeepers in many countries have a long tradition of loving and caring for their bees, and the same is true of bee research workers. They are therefore willing to help, and to contribute what is within their power to give - especially information about the habits and performance of their bees. We therefore have a constant inflow of personal observations, about different bees, different honey plants, notification of new parasites and diseases, and so on. We also have contacts in many countries who will respond to our own requests.

STRUCTURE OF IBRA

IBRA is a non-profit-making organization funded by membership and journal subscriptions, by sales of publications, and by direct grants-in-aid from governmental and other sources; some grants are annual and some are for time-limited contract work. Much of IBRA's operative strength (and of its economy of operation) is derived from the fact that it was founded on a voluntary basis by individuals who saw the need for such an institution, created it, and supported it - in the early days by working without payment, and in later years by providing specialized knowledge, including manuscripts for publication, and by making the Association known to others who should join in its work.

IBRA was founded in 1949, by a group of beekeepers and scientists in the United Kingdom (UK) who were active in the British Beekeepers' Association (BBKA). It was incorporated under the English Companies Act as Bee

Research Association (BRA), the word International being added in 1976 at the request of our Members. Its relatively simple structure makes for economic and efficient administration. Members from any country may be elected to its governing Council.

In 1966 IBRA was able to purchase Hill House, the Association's headquarters, as the result of an international appeal for funds; previously the work had been done in private houses. The present staff of 17 (some part-time) work at Hill House, 30 km west of London and conveniently near London Airport. They include a botanist, chemist and entomologist, and a biologist who is Information Officer for Tropical Apiculture, a post funded by the UK Overseas Development Administration; several staff members have wide beekeeping experience.

PRESENT WORK

A. Information input:

- A1. publications sent by authors for reporting in Apicultural Abstracts (AA)
- A2. photocopies from the UK National Lending Library (NLL) and the Commonwealth Institute of Entomology (CIE)
- A3. printouts from IBRA profile on United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Current Awareness Literature Service
- A4. books sent by authors for reporting in Bee World (BW) and/or AA
- A5. gifts and bequests of older books
- A6. all apicultural journals currently published (100+), and many newsletters
- A7. primary research manuscripts for publishing in Journal of Apicultural Research (JAR)
- A8. reports, informative letters and other unpublished items
- A9. unpublished translations of publications (mostly English)
- A10. information, unsolicited and by request, from members in over 100 countries, especially the IBRA Regional Representatives.

B. Information base in Main IBRA Library at Hill House

This is accumulated from information input since 1949:

- B1. 30 000 reprints and other publications
 - 7000 volumes of journals and other serials (750 titles)
 - 500 theses and unpublished reports
 - 1600 unpublished translations

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- B1. 27 000 reprints of scientific papers
 - 4000 books
 - 7000 volumes of journals and other serials (750 titles)
 - 500 theses and unpublished reports
 - 1600 unpublished translations

B2. Card indexes:

union author catalogue 50 000 cards) many with abstracts
 subject catalogue 90 000 cards)
 microfilm index to USDA Bee Bibliography (36 000 author,
 48 000 subject entries)

B3. Picture Collection:

11 000 photographic prints and drawings
 3500 colour transparencies
 various audiovisual materials

C. Information bases in Branches of the IBRA Library:

- C1. Branch for Africa: InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources
 (Organisation of African Unity), Nairobi, Kenya
- C2. Branch for Tropical Asia: Central Bee Research Institute,
 Pune, India
- C3. Branch for Eastern Asia: Institute of Honeybee Science,
 Tamagawa, Japan
- C4. Branch for South & Central America: now being negotiated.

These Branches contain valuable collections of:

books and journals (purchased by the host institution and/or through
 grant aid)
 reprints from authors via IBRA
 Apicultural Abstracts, which in Africa serves also as a cataloguing
 medium for books and reprints

D. Information output:

- D1. Apicultural Abstracts, quarterly, reporting new scientific
 and technical publications. AA is produced in the computer-
 operated system of the Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux (CAB)
- D2. Bee World, quarterly, includes reviews and other articles, news,
 lists of books received, new translations, and other material
- D3. Journal of Apicultural Research, quarterly, a leading primary
 research journal
- D4. Newsletters from Information Officer for Tropical Apiculture, sent
 to 500 addresses in developing countries concerned with beekeeping
- D5. List 1: Publications of the International Bee Research Association
 List 2: Book Selection of the International Bee Research Association
 List 3: Audio-visual material obtainable from the International Bee
 Research Association
 sent annually or biennially to a wide range of addresses

- D6. Microfiche supplement to the Apicultural Abstracts Index (E1), 1973 to date computer output microfilm (COM), from University of Guelph, Canada. Updated annually
- D7. Microfiche Author & Subject Catalogue of the IBRA Library (excluding publications reported in Apicultural Abstracts). Stage 1, 6000 publications, 1982. Updated stages to follow.
AA cards = CASCIAA

E. Books and other non-serial publications:

E1. Indexes include:

Index to Apicultural Abstracts 1950-1972 (subject and author indexes, computer-generated at University of Guelph, Canada)
Index to Bee World 1919-1949, hard copy, published 1962 (for the 30 years before Apicultural Abstracts, Bee World was the chief medium for reporting new publications, etc.)

E2. Books include:

Honey: a comprehensive survey (with Heinemann) 1975
Apiculture in Tropical Climates (Report of Conference) 1976
Bees, pesticides & integrated pest management (COPR, 1982)
Apiculture and honey production in the developing countries of the tropics and subtropics. English, French, Spanish editions
FAO, 1983
Beekeeping in rural development (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1979)

E3. Multilingual Dictionary of Beekeeping Terms (Apimondia, 1977-1979):

Volume 5 English-French-German-Spanish-Russian
Volume 6 English-Finnish-Hungarian
Volume 7 English-German-Dutch-Danish-Norwegian-Swedish
Volume 8 English-French-Italian-Spanish-Portuguese-Romanian
Volumes 1-4 are out of print, but the languages are covered in later volumes.

E4. Bibliographies;

IBRA Bibliographies (Series)
Bibliography of Tropical Apiculture (BOTA), 4000 entries
BOTA Satellite Bibliographies, 2800 further entries
(both the above funded by IDRC, 1978)*
British bee books: a bibliography 1500-1976 (IBRA, 1979)

E5. Leaflets for developing countries:

Source Materials for Apiculture (SAM) 10 leaflets (funded by IDRC, 1982)*
Information Sheets on Tropical Apiculture, by Information Officer for Tropical Apiculture (1981 and on)*

* Free in response to appropriate requests from developing countries.

IBRA'S ROLE IN THE WORLD

IBRA's primary aim is the promotion and use of bee research, and especially its applications to apiculture. In this small specialized field, a relatively high proportion of the workers are known personally to each other and to IBRA. If we need advice on a certain subject, we are likely to know the best person in the world to ask, and he or she is likely to help in the way requested. Member participation in the Association's work is appreciable; also, because the headquarters are within half an hour of Heathrow Airport, a fair proportion of Members are able to visit IBRA when their travels take them through London.

Although our field is specialized and fairly clear cut, it does involve a number of disciplines, and this demands a wide range of knowledge at headquarters. Entomology, physiology and ethology (bees), botany (honey plants), chemistry (honey and other bee products), pathology (bee diseases) are all needed, as well as a comprehensive knowledge of beekeeping equipment and methods applicable to different countries and climates.

IBRA is involved with two series of international conferences held at four-yearly intervals:

Convenor of International Conference on Apiculture in Tropical Climates
(1, London 1976; 2, New Delhi 1980; 3, Nairobi 1984)

Convenor, with the IUBS International Commission for Bee Botany, of
International Symposium on Pollination (1, Copenhagen 1960; 2,
London 1964; 3, Prague 1974; 4, Maryland 1978; 5, Versailles 1983)

Since 1976, IBRA has been increasingly led into organizing information for developing countries. Apiculture in these countries has a great potential for expansion, provided the necessary information is available to them, and is kept up to date. It is IBRA's belief that one important requirement in achieving this end is a global monitoring and liaison centre for apiculture. IBRA is the most suitable organization to undertake the additional work involved, and funding of US\$ 200 000 is being actively sought for the purpose, for three years in the first instance.

WORK WITH "UNITS OF INFORMATION" OTHER THAN DOCUMENTS

The above list of information output and input refers almost entirely to published material or other documents: the unit that must be recorded is a document of some sort. But IBRA is also involved with information banks of other types, and we have recently been exploring ways of analysing and making such information available in cost-effective ways. Examples are given below; no. 1 and (less so) no. 4 are time-critical:

1. World distribution of honeybee diseases and parasites

The first preliminary maps were published in 1982, and the next stages are (a) to upgrade the maps using new information elicited by the first maps, and (b) to obtain funding for an on-going monitoring system.

2. Important world honey sources

Phase I, leading to internal records on multiple slips, was completed in 1981. Phase II, using a word processor to produce a "Directory of the most important world honey sources" for publication will be started in late 1982. Phase III, building up a more extensive permanent information base stored on discs, to be updated with new information as this becomes available, will follow, and will also be used for searches on request.

3. Pollination of world crops

Information for each crop on pollination requirements (and whether inadequate pollination is likely to be a constraint to maximum yields) and on the use of agents other than wind if these are required; such agents are normally insects and usually various bees.

4. World-wide address lists

These enable us to respond usefully to one of the commonest types of request for information from developing countries, for contact addresses: where to obtain training, grant-aid, bees, beekeeping supplies, and where to market bee products.