



**FAIRTRADE HONEY IN LATIN AMERICA**

# HONEY NETWORK

In 1996, two Producer Networks formed in Latin America: “CLA,” or the Latin American Network of Coffee Growers, and “PAUAL,” United Beekeepers of Latin America. Both of these networks represented small-scale producers working on fair trade terms.

In 2004, CLAC was officially formed, representing all Fairtrade organizations throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Today, CLAC is made up of Product Networks, bringing together organizations that cultivate the same product on a continental level.

The Honey Network, for example, is one of these networks, and has been active since the origins of the fair trade movement. Currently, it is made up of 29 Fairtrade honey organizations in seven countries, including Mexico, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay and Argentina.

Today, beekeepers are facing many challenges, threatening the future sustainability of honey production in the region. Addressing these challenges, whether they be commercial, environmental or political, in addition to solving problems related production and quality, are fundamental areas of work for the Honey Network.



# SERVICES AND SUPPORT

By means of the Honey Network, and the Product and Market Coordinator for Honey, CLAC provides services and support to the Fairtrade honey organizations in Latin America, specifically focusing on areas such as quality, productivity and commercial relations.

This line of work includes services and activities such as:

Regular meetings (via webinar) with honey organizations to share information on market tendencies and pricing

These also include follow-up evaluations and updates on honey development in each region

Encourage and support organizations' participation in trade shows and symposiums

Direct support to organizations to problem-solve and improve honey quality

Organize the Honey Network's annual meetings

Raise awareness and communicate about the importance of bees and beekeeping in general

Gather information and evaluate the impact of new import regulations on honey supplies

Develop training material for honey organizations to share knowledge on best practices, in both beekeeping and manufacturing, and raise awareness about climate change and adaptation measures in honey

Provide information to clients, strategic partners and other allies, as well as consumers, including infographics, videos, newsletters, Producer Profiles, etc.

Share information on changes to Fairtrade Honey Standards and provide training if needed

Support National Fairtrade Organizations (NFOs) and licensees by sharing information from honey organizations, such as production capacity and organizational growth

Promote collaboration between laboratories, institutions and agencies that specialize in honey, to share information and technical specifications



# PRODUCT DIVERSIFICATION FOR LOCAL MARKETS



***Regarding said project, organization president Gustavo Bertoldi says: “I believe that producing packaged honey is a very important aspect of diversification that adds value [to the product] and meets the desire of producers to deliver a quality product directly to the final consumer.” The target market in the first stage of the project is Argentina, as the organization believes in the potential of southern markets. “Although it will initially be a small volume, it’s a very interesting niche,” he concludes.***

The Cooperativa de Provision Apicola COSAR Ltda. is made up of more than 120 small-scale beekeepers in the central-northern province of Santa Fe, Argentina. The organization was Fairtrade certified in 2008, although the Fairtrade values and principles have been a part of COSAR since its inception.

After 15 years of experience exporting bulk honey, COSAR, with funds from the Fairtrade Premium, developed a project to diversify its production by developing packaged honey for the local market. This project adds value to the organization’s honey, aiming to access the local market and generate greater recognition from consumers.

Thanks to the Fairtrade Premium, the organization has improved its planning and management processes, in addition to strengthening its technical department and infrastructure. The training and technical assistance provided to members make up the base of the organization and the quality of its honey. And finally, the Premium has also contributed to investments made in machinery and installations for the honey processing and packaging plant, key aspects to carrying out the local project.



# BEST PRACTICES

## BEEKEEPING AND CLIMATE CHANGE: EFFECTS, ACTIONS AND CHALLENGES

Greenhouse gas concentrations have reached levels never before detected. As a result, sea and land temperatures are  $\sim 1^{\circ}\text{C}$  greater than in the pre-industrial era, and rainfall has become more variable and extreme, jeopardizing agricultural production.

In the particular case of beekeeping, the impacts of climate change have resulted in temperature uncertainty and changing humidity, including irregular, absent or excess rainfall. These affect the floral cycles and flowers' phenology, honey production, as well as the physical conditions and health of beehives.

Due to the high dependence that exists between the quality of the environment and bee productivity, beekeepers continue to monitor the changing landscape and climate.

As a result, Fairtrade producers are taking measures to reduce the effects of climate change on honey production and product quality.

CLAC considers climate change to be one of greatest challenges affecting its member organizations; and therefore, is working with small-scale producers to develop adaptation methods and mitigate its effects. Based on a family farming approach, CLAC, along with the Honey Network, is working to develop information, share knowledge and identify alternatives so that Fairtrade producers (and workers) can better prevent and fight climate change.

In this line of work, the network set up an initiative to study what adaptation methods can be implemented to mitigate the effects, and consequences, of climate change in beekeeping. As stakeholders, CLAC's member organizations believe it is very important to work with allies in the public sector and civil society, as well as other actors in the honey supply chain. This will help raise awareness about the negative effects of climate change on producer livelihoods and provide information on common adaptation methods, in addition to creating synergies to seek collective solutions.

A best practices guide was also developed for producers, that contains information on climate change mitigation in beekeeping. This guide was developed by CLAC and the Honey Network, in collaboration with Fairtrade Germany, who understands the importance of climate change and how it affects beekeepers, their productivity and the quality of their honey.

The content, design and overall development of the guide was implemented with support from the Colegio de la Frontera Sur (ECOSUR) in Mexico and the Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria (INTA) in Argentina.



Some of the practices, or measures, that can be implemented to reduce the effects of climate change on honey quality and production, include moving beehives, strategic feeding (carbohydrates and proteins) and reforestation, or planting melliferous flora in their native regions, among others. In the end, when beekeepers work together, the scope of their actions have positive results, generating large-scale change throughout society.

Climate change is a reality that affects all of us, and for this reason, it is very important that it's "on the agenda" for Fairtrade honey organizations, as well as institutions, schools and governments.



***"For us (producers), Fairtrade is a strength. It provides us with benefits, in addition to a fair price for our product, giving us the opportunity to grow and share with other organizations."***

**Santos Rene Valverde**  
**Unión de Cooperativas Agropecuarias de El Sauce**  
**R.L (UCASA)**



# PRODUCER STORY

**Santiago Camposeco Sánchez**  
**GUAYA'B Asociación Civil, Guatemala**

Don Santiago lives in the Incheuex Village, in Jacaltenango, Guatemala, approximately 12 kilometers from the municipal capital. 62 years old, he is the third of six brothers, descendants of the Mayan subgroup Popti'. Santiago is also a widower and father to five children.

Currently, Santiago is an active member of GUAYA'B, a Fairtrade certified honey organization, and a beekeeping pioneer in his community. He started out in 1988 with just seven beehives, but his entrepreneurial vision has led him to what are today 300 hives, from which he not only extracts honey, but also pollen. He has become the largest producer of pollen in the region! Likewise, Santiago dedicates his free time to building boxes and other special equipment to collect pollen for other beekeepers in the area.

Santiago has managed to make beekeeping a family business. His son Manuel works in the carpentry workshop, while his daughter, Brigida, has become an expert in pollen processing, specifically drying and cleaning. Beekeeping has changed the lives of his family, who have truly become “architects of biodiversity” in the region.

“Thanks to beekeeping, along with the support of GUAYA'B, and above all, Fairtrade, I have managed to come out ahead [economically]. Beekeeping has also allowed me to involve my children, so that they too can be successful and continue the work when I'm gone.”



