



**Australian
Honey Bee**
INDUSTRY COUNCIL

Beekeeping as a business

Beekeeping offers an interesting and rewarding career for people interested in food production and working outside. Beekeepers manage and operate apiaries to produce honey and other products such as beeswax, propolis, venom and royal jelly. They also sell bees and provide important pollination services.

The most important place to start when thinking about beekeeping as a business is to seek professional training and join your local or state beekeeping association to learn from experienced beekeepers.



**Producing
honey**



**Selling
bees**



**Pollinating
crops**



Producing honey

Selling honey is the most common way to make money from bees and there are a few steps beekeepers need to follow before they begin:

1. Register your business name with the Australian Securities Investment Commission (ASIC) to receive your ABN or ACN.
2. Ensure you have a food safe extraction and packaging facility (each state and territory will have guidelines around what this entails including registering with the relevant food authority).
3. Complete B-QUAL Education and implement a certified quality assurance program.
4. Check with your local council regarding setting up a food business and their individual legal requirements (no matter the scale).

There are two ways to sell honey:

- Large-scale commercial producers can sell honey in bulk to wholesale honey packers who retail honey for domestic and export markets.
- Beekeepers can jar honey themselves and sell it to retail markets for a higher price.

If beekeepers choose to jar their own honey, they must comply with national food labelling laws, and include the name of the product, contact details, country of origin, weight and ingredients, which should be 100 per cent Australian honey. A nutritional information panel (NIP), which details the nutrient elements within the honey, must also be included on the packaging.

Because honey does not go off, there is no need to include a 'use by' or 'best before' date, instead a batch number must be visible on the packaging in the unlikely event the honey needs to be recalled. Beekeepers need to keep a sample of each batch of honey for two years and it is recommended they develop a recall plan.

Top Tip

Producers selling more than 1,500kg of honey per year also need to pay the Australian Government honey levy. More information: www.honeybee.org.au/industry-hub



Selling bees

Experienced beekeepers often sell bees to other registered beekeepers. This includes selling a 'nuc' or nucleus colonies, consisting of four to five frames of bees with a newly mated queen - this is commonly, referred to as a starter colony. They also sell full production colonies, either with or without the supers, which refers to the boxes placed on the beehive for bees to store honey.

There are specialised queen bee breeders who also sell new queens for commercial and recreational beekeepers or for export markets. which they use to brush pollen from the eyes, clean antennae, wipe dust from the wings and pack pollen spines.



Top Tip

You should only sell bees to registered beekeepers, and ensure they are healthy and free from pests and diseases.



Pollinating crops

Many beekeepers also travel around Australia providing important pollination services to growers of approximately 35 of the nation's agricultural and horticultural crops. These important services allow beekeepers to diversify their income away from exclusively producing honey.

Beekeepers often negotiate larger contracts through brokers, although they can be agreed directly with the farmer or grower.



Top Tip

Before providing pollination services, ensure you have a written contract outlining the responsibilities of both parties, including chemical use by the grower.

Watch the video: www.honeybee.org.au/industry-hub/beekeeping-101

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