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Introduction:

This document is intended to give interested persons or companies an overview of the OCCP's requirements for Organic Beekeeping. These requirements are taken from the OCCP standards (Section 5.9 of Animal Husbandry Standards) and adapted from international standards/policies. Bee keeping is considered to be part of animal husbandry. The general principles thereof also apply to bee keeping

OCCP standards was adopted by the Philippine National Standards on Organic Agriculture and Processing in 2005 after undergoing a series of public consultations

Minimum Requirements:

1. Beekeeping practice


- Bees must be treated as gently as possible.
- The use of synthetic chemical means to pacify or expel the bees is prohibited.
- The use of smoke should be reduced to a minimum. Natural materials (e.g. wood, dried vegetable parts) or products from natural materials are to be preferred as smoking materials.
- It is forbidden to mutilate the bees e.g. by clipping their wings

2. Stocks

- Stock must be built up from own or organic colonies, using swarms or colony division
- It is only permissible to buy colonies or queens from conventional sources provided they do not make up more than 10% per year of the existing stock
- Colonies purchased from conventional beekeepers must undergo a one year conversion period
- Genetic engineering and the use of genetically manipulated bees is prohibited

3. Location of colonies/apiaries

- The collection area shall allow bees to preferably forage on organically managed fields and/or wild natural areas
- Uncultivated or organically farmed land is to be chosen when installing the bees.
- The location must be such that a guarantee can be given that no significant deterioration of the bee products by contamination from agricultural or non-agricultural sources of pollution can be expected within a radius of 3 km of the hive
- Only as many colonies should be installed as can be sustained by the supply of pollen and nectar available
- If the location is changed due to insufficient forage, the location of the colonies should be recorded on a migration plan (map), showing also the dates, the place (name of the field or plot), pasture and number of colonies
- The hives of each of the bee colonies have to be marked distinctively and the colonies to be listed in an inventory

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4. Treatment of hives

- Beehives must be built mainly from natural materials
- The inside of the hives, except for the bottom, shall not be treated with paints or such materials.
- The bottom outside of the hives shall not be treated with pesticides containing paints or other prohibited materials.

5. Cleaning and disinfection

- Cleaning and disinfection should be done using heat (flaming out, hot water) or mechanical means.
- Only caustic soda, lactic and/or acetic acid or biological materials shall be used for hive disinfection
- The use of other chemicals is not permitted

6. Feeding


- The beekeeper should have enough honey in the hive to enable the bees to survive the rainy season.
- The bees should be fed with honey from its own apiaries
- In case artificial feeding is necessary for the healthy development of the colonies during dearth period (lean availability of nectar), organic sugar or sugar syrup may be used
- Supplemental feeding should be stopped a month before the expected nectar flow so as to minimize contamination of honey
- It is forbidden to feed pollen substitutes

7. Veterinary treatment

- A bee colony should be reared in such a way that it is capable of correcting any imbalances by itself
- chemical fungicides, pesticides and antibiotics cannot be used in raising the bees except in extreme cases where pests and parasites infestation have reached beyond tolerable limits
- the following methods and substances may be employed to combat the varroa mite:
 - lactic acid
 - formic acid
 - acetic acid
 - oxide acid
 - herbal teas
 - essential oils
 - biological technical and physical methods (e.g. use of heat)
- Any treatment of commercial colonies is only permitted during the period after the last honey harvest until up to 6 weeks before nectar flow begins

8. Extraction of honey and storage

- Harvesting of honey should be done only during the nectar flow season.
- The honey's valuable ingredients should be altered as little as possible during the processes of extraction, storage and conservation.

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- When processing honey, the temperature shall never exceed 35 degrees centigrade in order to preserve enzyme activity.

9. Labelling

- Only products that are produced, handled and processed according to these Standards may be labeled as "produce of organic agriculture" or similar
 - **"certified organic" or similar**- minimum of 95% of the ingredients are of certified organic origin and should carry the logo of the certification program
 - **"made with organic ingredients"**- less than 95% but not less than 70% of the ingredients are of certified organic origin and there is a clear statement of the proportion of the organic ingredients. An indication that the product is covered by the certification program may be used, close to the indication of the proportion of organic ingredients
 - Where less than 70% of the ingredients are of certified organic origin, the **indication that an ingredient is organic may appear in the ingredient list**. Such product may not be called "organic".

Records and Traceability:

The company must maintain updated documents of the following, containing key information to allow evaluation of compliance with standards:

1. Map of apiary site
 - location of hives, relevant vegetation, eventual sources of pollution
2. Production diary for each single colony
 - information on general handling, reproduction, veterinary treatments, and special observations
3. Yield and Sales Records
4. Other supporting documents- receipts, invoices

These documents must be maintained for at least three years after harvest and be available for inspection at all times.

The operator has to establish a system for assuring traceability and ensuring that sold products actually come from approved areas.


Knowledge:

The operator has to study and keep a copy (hard copy or electronic file) of the respective standards

The operator needs to have adequate knowledge on organic beekeeping rules and technologies

Note:

Please be aware that this is only a selection of the essential requirements of the standards and everyone is advised to get a copy of the standards and study all the requirements of the standards. A copy of the OCCP standards may be obtained from the OCCP website

 <p>OCCP ORGANIC CERTIFICATION CENTER OF THE PHILIPPINES</p>	10.06.10	Brief Information: Beekeeping	Page 4 of 4 Information
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www.occp.phils.org while the Philippine National Standards may be obtained from the DA-BAFPS website