



JARA IN VET

Impact Report
May 2024



Introduction

The ALCP and ALCP2 have supported vocational educational training (VET) in the honey sector to help develop the sector. The opportunity to support honey related VET was a naturally occurring entry point and provided the opportunity to help boost sectoral change. It arose when key players approached the programme facilitated Georgian Beekeepers Union to make improvements and additions to existing beekeeping courses in VET colleges across Georgia. It included the development and inclusion of a module on Jara beekeeping. Jara was a dying practice when the programme began interventions to develop the traditional harvesting of wild Jara honey as a flagship product for the Georgian honey sector from 2014. VET was seen as key to spreading information and engaging younger people in this ancient practice laying the foundation for its future expansion.

In 2020, the Jara beekeeping module was added to the beekeeping course at eight VET colleges. Since then, 208 students (28% women) from Ajara, Samegrelo, Shida Kartli, and Kakheti have studied it and 87 are currently enrolled.

This assessment finalized in May 2024, was intended to assess what impact the module had on beekeeping students particularly in relation to their interest in Jara honey production.

Methodology

The respondents were selected from graduates and current students enrolled in the course and easily contactable. From a total sample size of 219, 57 (26%) students were randomly selected and surveyed, reflecting the overall sample demographics (28% women, 18% youth).

General findings

At the beginning of the survey, all students were asked about the impact of the Jara VET course on their beekeeping activities (*Figure 1*). 47% of the students reported gaining knowledge about traditional Jara beekeeping methods, 46% mentioned acquiring knowledge about new improved beekeeping practices that they could apply, one-third (33%) expressed increased interest in Jara beekeeping methods.

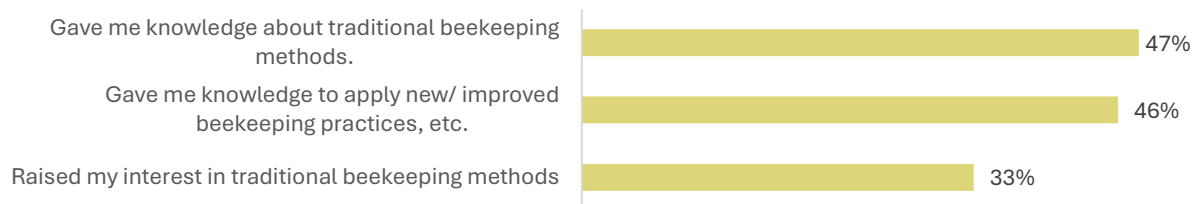


Figure 1. How has the Jara VET course affected you, reflected on your beekeeping activities?

Findings for the existing Jara Beekeepers

Out of the total 57 surveyed students, 9% i.e. five were beekeepers who were practicing Jara beekeeping at the time of taking the module.

Of the five Jara beekeepers who took the module, two of them reported that the experience encouraged them to continue, start, or expand their beekeeping activities. The module also provided some of them with valuable knowledge about traditional beekeeping methods and equipped them with the understanding needed to apply new and improved beekeeping practices.

Four out of five respondents highlighted the value and quality of Jara honey as a motivation for starting/ continuation of practicing Jara beekeeping. While two named interest in traditional beekeeping methods and increased demand from consumers as the answer to the same question.

All expressed positive intentions regarding the future of Jara production. The majority (three out of five) planned to increase their investment and production and showed willingness to support others in Jara production by providing consultations.

To successfully sustain their Jara beekeeping practices, they emphasized the need for additional resources, particularly Jara hives, equipment, and materials for hive production.

As for challenges in their Jara beekeeping activities, some respondents noted difficulty in treating diseases in Jara hives, even when using bio medicines.

Findings of the non- Jara beekeeping students

When asking the remaining 52 students who were not Jara beekeepers whether they were interested in producing Jara honey following the course 21 (40%) gave a positive response. (Figure 2)

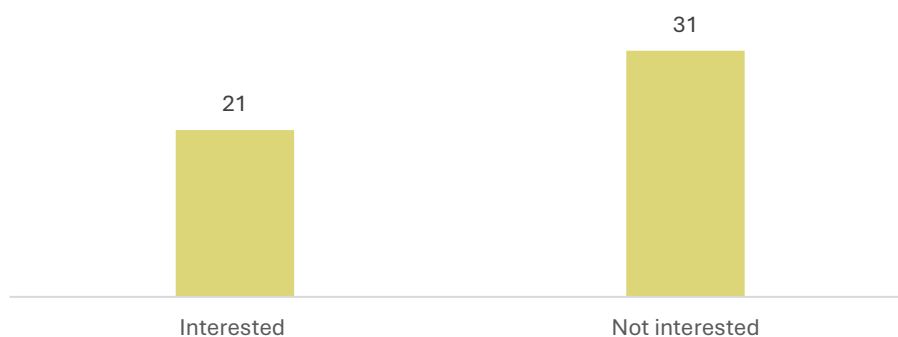


Figure 2. Are you interested in Jara production?

81% of the students interested in producing Jara honey were from the Ajara region. Conversely, among students with no particular interest in Jara production, a significant share 61% (19 out of 31) were from Kakheti in eastern Georgia, citing incompatible natural conditions such as no suitable mountains or forests near their residences.

Findings amongst interested students

Among the non Jara producer students interested in producing Jara (Figure 3), twenty one individuals, the most common reasons for their interest were the natural and high-quality characteristics of Jara honey, its market value, and the possibility of conducting Jara beekeeping in their local environments which are conducive to Jara production (mountains, forests, away from roads). Other reasons included interest in traditional beekeeping methods, increased consumer demand, attractiveness to tourists, and the ease of managing Jara hives.

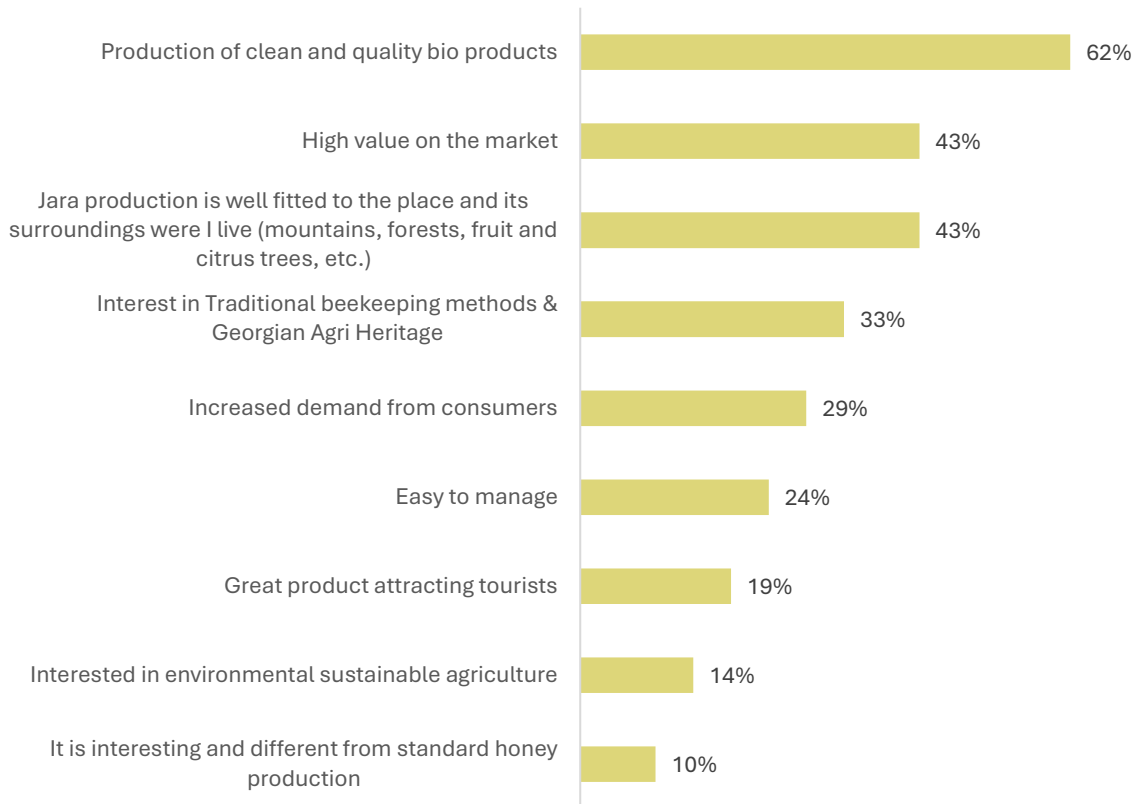


Figure 3. Why is Jara beekeeping interesting and attractive to you?

When asked about additional resources needed to start Jara beekeeping (Figure 3), 13 (62%) students mentioned the need for Jara hives with some mentioning the perceived challenges in finding good-quality and affordable Jara hives, while 5 (24%) indicated a requirement for more information and knowledge about Jara honey production.

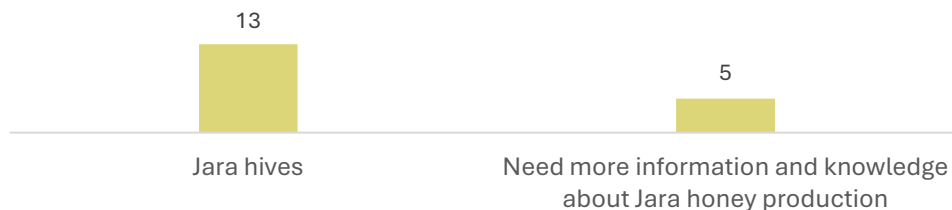


Figure 3. What additional resources do you require to start & Producing Jara? (out of those who said were interested 21)

The most common sources of information for the Jara course students about Jara beekeeping (Figure 4) were course members and lecturers, supplemented by online sources and interactions with other beekeepers to expand their knowledge.

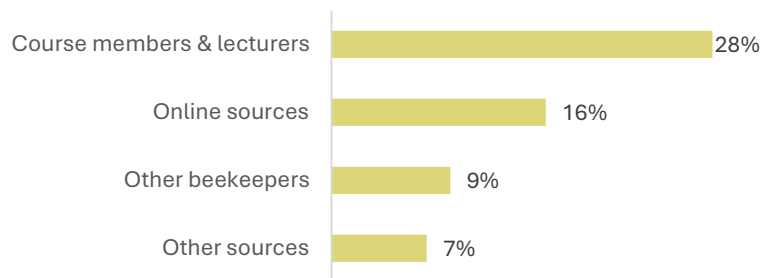


Figure 4. From where do you receive new information about Jara?

Conclusion

The introduction of the Jara beekeeping module in VET courses has successfully acquainted students with Georgian traditional beekeeping practices, raising their interest significantly. Many students expressed positive intentions to start Jara honey production, appreciating its value and the uniqueness of Jara honey.

However, there is a clear need for better linkages to practical sources of help for interested students. The availability of good-quality Jara hives remains a crucial requirement for successful adoption and expansion of this practice. Enhanced support and access to high-quality Jara hives as well as to practicing Jara beekeepers who can further boost their confidence and capabilities will help foster a new generation of skilled Jara beekeepers. A clear practical step is to link interested beekeepers who have taken the module to the Jara Beekeepers Association.

Jara beekeeping is highly specific, requiring specific locations and natural conditions to be successful. Tailoring the education to relevant audiences, such as students in the Ajara region and possibly somewhere like Racha which is also remote could also benefit expansion.