



Beekeeper Interview

Giorgos Katsivas

Messini / Greece

Programme: Erasmus+ Bees and More

Roles:

- Georgia (Student – Researcher)
- Lentio (Student – Researcher)
- Giorgos Katsivas (Beekeeper)

Interview Transcript

Georgia: Hello. Thank you very much for being able to come to our school today. We are participating in an Erasmus programme about bees and we would like to ask you some questions. My name is Georgia.

Lentio: My name is Lentio.

Beekeeper: My name is Giorgos. I am a second-generation beekeeper and I continue my father's profession. I have been involved since a very young age and I truly love it.

Georgia: Approximately how many years have you been involved in beekeeping?

Beekeeper: Since I was very young I used to help my father. I carried out my first hive inspection when I was fourteen. In total, I have been involved in beekeeping for almost twenty years.

Lentio: Is it your main profession?

Beekeeper: Yes, it is my main profession.

Georgia: In which areas do you operate?

Beekeeper: During the winter my base is in Messinia, but I operate in almost all parts of Greece: Laconia, Iliia, Evia, Thessaly, Arcadia and other areas depending on the flowering periods.

Lentio: Are there beekeeping associations in your area?

Beekeeper: There are, but I am not a member of any association. I know they organize activities, but I cannot provide more details.



Georgia: What types of honey and other bee products do you produce?

Beekeeper: I produce thyme honey, orange blossom honey, fir honey, pine honey, oak honey and cotton honey. I also produce royal jelly and pollen.

Lentio: What impact do climate and the environment have on your bees?

Beekeeper: Climate change is the main problem. Ten or fifteen years ago we could roughly predict what each year would bring. Now every year is different. Sometimes we have intense drought, while other times there is excessive rainfall at inappropriate periods, such as during flowering. This significantly reduces production because the bees do not have time to take advantage of nectar secretion.

Georgia: What changes have you observed in the health of the bees and in the availability of flowering plants?

Beekeeper: Flowering periods are shorter. Excessive heat accelerates flowering and the bees do not have time to take advantage of it. Regarding health, nothing major has changed. The main disease, varroa, remains the same and we deal with it as we did before.

Lentio: What can farmers and landowners do to create a better environment for pollinators?

Beekeeper: They can plant plants of beekeeping interest, such as carob trees and other bee-friendly plants. Biodiversity helps both the environment and the bees.

Georgia: What do you consider the biggest threats to bees, apart from varroa?

Beekeeper: Certainly climate change. There is also an increase in a beetle that kills bees. For now it is under control, but if drought continues it may become a serious problem.

Lentio: How do you ensure the health and well-being of your bees?

Beekeeper: We make sure there is always a reserve of honey inside the hive so that the bees can survive during periods when there is not enough food. We provide supplementary feeding when necessary and we carry out frequent inspections.

Georgia: What should consumers pay attention to when buying honey?

Beekeeper: It is difficult for an average consumer to distinguish pure honey from adulterated honey. I would recommend avoiding large retail chains and buying honey directly from a beekeeper they trust. One major issue is imported honey that is mixed with Greek honey and sold as Greek honey.

Lentio: What is the most satisfying part of beekeeping for you?

Beekeeper: When your efforts are rewarded. When you make the right decisions and see the results in production. The last few years have been difficult, but the satisfaction comes when you see that your efforts pay off.



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Georgia: What advice would you give to someone who wants to start beekeeping?

Beekeeper: Honestly, I would tell them to think very carefully about it because it is a difficult profession. However, if someone truly wants it, they should start with a few hives, test themselves and learn to make the right decisions.

Georgia: Thank you very much.

Beekeeper: Thank you as well.