

## PLANNING OF A HONEY BASED PRODUCT'S INTRODUCTION TO THE MARKET

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**Abstract:** *The aim of the study was to plan market launch of a special honey based product to the market. The product idea was a fruit flavoured processed honey (mainly) for children. A survey was carried on by questionnaire and a SWOT analyses was made on the new product in the South-Eastern part of Hungary. Mothers with children were preferred natural sweeteners as honey, and they are continuously looking for new products. Usually more money was spent for the children in the families. The new product could be successful on the local market and it could help to develop a family size apiary.*

**Keywords:** *flavoured product, honey, marketing, consumers' attitude*

### INTRODUCTION

Hungary has a long tradition in the honey production and making honeybee products. The beekeeping as occupation itself has been an independent activity since the ancient times. Nowadays Hungary is placed among the European countries with well-developed quality honey production [3].

Hungary as well as Romania [2] at European level is one of the leading honey exporters, although on the local market are found also the import products, mainly from the European Union and beyond (e.g. China). The domestic market of honey is dominated by hundreds of individual beekeepers with a few firms, which, besides their own production collect and process honey from others.

A part of honey products on the market is not fully indicating the place of their origin or the method of processing. The imitation of food products means illicit profits, unfair competition, consumer fraud, and a potential source of economic damage [1].

Some of the solvent consumers in addition to looking for the component of healthy diet, they require continuously new products. On the other hand the small producers should find for themselves a niche market. We plan to produce a new honey product, which based on a high quality honey and flavoured with powder of natural dried fruits. It will not be a fake product, because it will not be honey, but processed honey product.

The aim of the study was to plan market launch for this special honey based fruit flavoured product mainly for children.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The product idea was a fruit flavoured processed honey (mainly) for children. A survey was carried on by questionnaire in the South-Eastern part of Hungary. The questionnaire was shared on the Facebook and 136 people were sent back as completely filled. The sample was not representative, because it contained only internet users, and the

number of young ladies with children was overrepresented. The questionnaire contained 18 questions about the details of answering person and their honey eating habits.

Detailed interviews were also carried out with 16 honey producers at LLL training, who are looking for new production and/or market possibilities.

A SWOT analyses was also made on the information and experiences of the survey and the interviews.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

The distribution of answering people by their personal data was the following:

- The share of respondents by sex was 58% female and 42% male.
- 88% of the sample's age was between 18 and 45 years.
- 51% of the answerers lived in cities, 49% of them lived in rural areas.
- 61% of the sample was married.
- 84% of them had child or children.
- The level of education was 56% of higher education and 33% had high school.

This research evaluates consumer behaviour related to informational messages about honey that is produced locally and domestically. Results from 136 consumers show that consumers' demand for honey varies significantly based on the geographic location of the honey's production, product packaging and the information they have about the product. Consumers demonstrate greater demand for locally produced honey, especially when provided information about negative aspects of internationally produced honey.

Most of the sample (91%) use honey as sweetener in our region. The frequency of consumption was high (49% daily, 35% weekly). Only 10 persons use honey occasionally or never. Among the honey varieties the acacia was the winner, the second one was the polyfloral honey and the third was the linden honey. The same result was found in a Romanian survey [4]. Nobody indicated the sunflower or canola honey. The acacia honey was preferred for its high quality and the polyfloral honey is popular due to its relative cheap price.

The taste of the honey, the educational level and occupation (salary) were the main characteristics that influence the honey consumption behaviour. The parents with children emphasized the healthiness of the product, and they are always looking for the honeys with the best price-value rate, and for the natural products. The consumption could be increased in all groups upon a price reduction. The well educated group is willing to try new products if they will get enough information about it.

The results of the interviews with producers about developing a new honey based processed product especially for children are summarized in the SWOT analyses (Table 1). In the last years the xillit and the stevia plant were introduced as natural and healthy sweeteners, but all sweeteners has a more or less special savour by the consumers' opinion. That's why we try to develop a honey based product with the flavour of well-known and popular fruits (e.g. strawberry, raspberry).

**Table 1: Result of the SWOT analyses on the flavoured honey**

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Weakness</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The high quality of the product.</li> <li>- It could be produced from local honey.</li> <li>- All components are available in the region.</li> <li>- The parents of children tend to buy almost anything.</li> <li>- Easy and not expensive technology for production</li> <li>- Attractive and easy to use package for children</li> <li>- At the moment it is a special product, no competition</li> <li>- Internet could be used by the producers for approach of potential consumers.</li> <li>- There is a willingness among the producers to find new niche market.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The quantity of the local honey is limited.</li> <li>- The calculated price is relative high to average wages in Hungary.</li> <li>- There is no marketing expert among honey producers.</li> <li>- The introduction and promotion of the product will generate extra costs.</li> <li>- The planned product is natural, but unusual.</li> <li>- Some honey producer have no experience/knowledge to process honey</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Traits</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Permanent, contractual relations with local groceries.</li> <li>- Strong promotion for children in school canteens.</li> <li>- Appearance of social strata who are willing to pay is increasing (first of all in Budapest).</li> <li>- Pay attention to programs (EU subsidy) for healthy lifestyle and marketing of local products.</li> <li>- The development of family farming and honey distribution in the region.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Appearance of competitors</li> <li>- The permanent high level of honey's quality and quantity is not stabile due to the weather conditions.</li> <li>- The product is not known so to build up its image takes time.</li> <li>- The success of the product could be measured only after the arrangements and manufacturing.</li> <li>- The horizontal integration for the co-operation in processing and seems to be questionable</li> </ul>

## CONCLUSIONS

Honey is becoming increasingly popular with consumers for its nutritional benefits as well as many other functions. Mothers with children were preferred natural sweeteners as honey, and they are continuously looking for new products. Usually more money was spent for the children in the families.

The new product could be successful on the local market and it could help to develop a family size apiary. If the new product will be recognized as local product it will be sold in a range of 40 km and Budapest.

Respondents showed a higher willingness to pay for honey from their country of origin versus the production method used. This shows that such negative media attention on specialty products (e.g. honey from foreign countries) offers small producers an opportunity to increase profitability by marketing themselves as a specialized niche alternative.

Our results suggest that while beekeeping might be an important strategy for diversification, if suitable communication is not taken into consideration, the added value of the production method might not be perceived by consumers.

Beekeeping has not only an economic importance (honeybee products and pollination), but also an environmental and social one.

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