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Zootechnical indices of beekeeping properties in the hinterland of Alagoas

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Currently, beekeeping is establishing itself as a prominent economic activity on a national scale, with a particularly strong presence in the Brazilian Semi-Arid region. The state of Alagoas is part of this context, with the sertão region being particularly favorable for beekeeping due to its environmentally friendly nature and the low investment required to start production. However, like any other activity, there are negative factors that need to be overcome to achieve better results in the sector. The objective of this study was to evaluate the zootechnical indices of beekeeping properties in the Sertão region of Alagoas. The method used consists of descriptive and quantitative characteristics. Data collection for this study involved interviews conducted through questionnaires. These interviews and consultations were carried out by professionals from Efetiva Consultoria e Projetos LTDA on 40 properties located in four municipalities in the Sertão region of Alagoas as part of the "Project Pollinating the Sertão. The study addressed issues such as the education level and duration of beekeeping activity, whether producers record their management practices, whether they perform vegetation recomposition in their beekeeping units, whether they use water troughs in their apiaries, and finally, their honey harvesting practices. The data were tabulated and statistically analyzed using Excel (2010), resulting in percentage outcomes for the studied variables. It was found that the education level and duration of activity of the beekeepers remained unchanged, with approximately 50% having completed primary school, 27.5% having completed secondary school, 15% having a university degree, and 7.5% having a postgraduate degree. In terms of beekeeping experience, the majority (42.5%) had between 1 to 5 years of activity, 37.5% had over 10 years, and 20% had between 5 to 10 years. While the duration of activity indicates a degree of knowledge, it does not necessarily translate to professionalism and the effective application of techniques and management practices suitable for the semi-arid region. When asked if producers keep records of their management practices, 39.47% reported doing so, managing their economic and zootechnical production processes, while 60.53% did not keep any records. All the properties attended to (100%) performed vegetation recomposition in their production units. Regarding the use of water troughs in their apiaries, 81.58% used them and highlighted their importance in benefiting beekeeping management, while 18.42% did not use them. In terms of honey harvesting, 32% processed honey in their homes, 13% in a collective extraction unit, 10% in their own extraction unit, 8% in a partner's residence, and 37% in various locations (garage, apiary, area near the apiaries). The beekeepers in the sertão region of Alagoas demonstrate a concern for sustainability by performing vegetation recomposition. However, the lack of record-keeping on beekeeping management practices suggests an area that could be improved for better business management.

Keywords: producers, techniques, production, apiaries.