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Creation of the first sensory panel of honeys in Uruguay

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Uruguay is a major honey producer, with an annual production of approximately 13,000 tons, making honey the most economically important beehive product. However, around 90-95% of the honey produced is exported in bulk, without differentiation. Although the country has comprehensive regulations and a traceability system, it is essential to establish protocols that allow our honeys to be presented in a differentiated way in the market, given the significant economic impact of the production and export of this product.

It is essential to establish quality and differentiation standards in the marketing of honey, to strengthen the sector. These standards include a sensory description of the product, which must be carried out by evaluators selected and trained specifically for this purpose. The main objective of this work is to develop and implement the first panel of judges trained in Uruguayan honeys, which will support research activities and provide services to the beekeeping sector, contributing to the characterization and valorization of honeys produced in the country.

PANEL DEVELOPMENT

- RECRUITMENT
- SELECTION
- TRAINING
- VALIDATION
- EVALUATION

The commercialization and export of honey with differentiated characteristics is crucial to obtain better sales prices and generate higher income for beekeepers, which plays a fundamental role in the development and sustainability of the beekeeping sector in Uruguay. Having this panel allows to highlight the unique qualities of each honey, strengthening the positioning of Uruguayan honeys in markets.

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Uruguay is a country in South America known for its green landscapes and beach-lined coast. It is a major honey producer, with an annual production of approximately 13.000 tons, making honey the most economically important product derived from beehives. However, around 90% of the honey produced is exported in bulk, without differentiation. Despite Uruguay's comprehensive regulations and a traceability system, establishing protocols that allow our honeys to be presented in a differentiated way in the market is essential, given the significant economic impact of the production and export of this product. To strengthen the competitiveness of the sector, it is crucial to implement quality and differentiation standards in the marketing of honey. These standards include a sensory description of the product, which must be carried out by evaluators selected and trained specifically for this purpose. The main objective of this work is to develop and implement the first panel of judges trained in Uruguayan honeys, which will support research activities and provide services to the beekeeping sector, contributing to the characterization and valorization of honeys produced in the country. The development of the panel was carried out in several stages: Recruitment, through an open call for volunteers and an online survey; Selection, based on tests assessing basic tastes identification, odor recognition, color and texture ordering, and triangular tests; Training, where participants were trained in the use of specific vocabulary and evaluation scales to improve both the sensitivity and response of the group; Validation, involving periodic tests to assess the performance of the evaluators; and Evaluation of samples of interest, stage in which the evaluation of the selected samples is carried out. Commercializing and exporting honey with differentiated characteristics is crucial to obtain better sales prices and generate higher income for beekeepers, which plays a fundamental role in the development and sustainability of the beekeeping sector in Uruguay. Establishing this panel will allow to highlight the unique qualities of each honey, strengthening the positioning of Uruguayan honeys in markets.