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Production Theory and Resource Economics

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Is Beekeeping a Viable Additional Income for the Rural Poor?

An economic analysis of beekeeping and honey hunting as additional income alternatives for the rural poor in the Philippine Cordillera, Luzon, the Philippines

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by

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ABSTRACT

The European honeybee, *Apis mellifera*, was introduced into the Philippine Cordillera collaboratively through international and national development agencies as part of programs aimed to support rural livelihoods. In addition, these projects are intended to be a substitute for honey hunting of the native honeybee species, *Apis dorsata* and *Apis cerana*, an activity practised by local communities for generations. Honey hunting is presumed to have negative side effects on the environment. Nevertheless, because the European honeybee is an exotic, its exploitation entails both financial and environmental costs, some of which have excluded the poorest households from adopting beekeeping using this introduced species. Moreover, the potential of exploiting the Philippine native bee species for the same economic purposes has been neglected. As well as the two species mentioned above the stingless bee, *Trigona spp.*, which is currently underutilized, will also be discussed. Using a cost-benefit analysis, this study compares the practices involving Philippine and European bee species as additional income sources for rural households in the Cordillera, regarding the profitability and financial constraints that the smallholder farmers might face when adopting the different beekeeping and honey hunting practices. It additionally evaluates the related socio-economic and environmental interactions and side effects, also taking into account the larger literature on the biological aspects of these bee species that might influence important cost-benefit determining factors.