

### NMFCCC Funding

- ✓ 2013
- ✓ 2014
- ✓ 2015
- ✓ 2016

# Northern Beekeeping Project

**Location** Spence Lake, Dawson Bay, Homebrook, Meadow Portage and Barrows are located throughout the Manitoba Parklands region and have populations under 150. They are all members of the Northern Association of Community Councils (NACC).

**Objective** To expand and explore the potential of beekeeping in communities in the remote north for community economic development, increased food security and improved pollination.

In 2013, five families and three communities began beekeeping and in 2014 relationships were developed with local trainers and mentors and the program planning and implementation evolved. In 2016 the project sought to expand by adding one new community to the project. New participants would be provided with training, mentorship, equipment and bees to learn how to keep bees and process resources from the hives. Existing participants would train and mentor new members. All profits are encouraged to be used in sustaining the project.

## Successes

- Beekeeping collaborative expanded from five families to nine and in two new communities.
- Training for new families was improved based on previous experience.
- NACC developed a project manual with five-year plan for supporting participants involved in beekeeping.
- Bees pollinated surrounding areas, increasing garden yields for residents.
- Use of local honey offset grocery bills as people substituted honey for refined sugar.
- Honey was donated to a local student for her project to design a label for packaging and marketing.
- Workshop at the local school educated students on honey production and extraction.
- NACC improved record keeping which allowed for a more successful and organized project.
- Families reinvested their profits from selling honey into their apiaries, increasing their self-sufficiency.
- Relationships between the participating families were strengthened.

## Challenges

- Many families reported difficulties with getting queens to re-queen their hives.
- One family lost their crop when a bear got in the hive.
- Removing honey frames without hurting the bees was difficult for new beekeepers.
- Poor weather and lack of wild alfalfa flowers reduced plant availability for pollination and honey.
- A delay in the delivery of the NMFCCC grant prevented some bees and supplies from arriving until later in the season, making it difficult for production and maintenance of hives.

## Next Steps

- Invest in the project to expand and add three more communities and up to 15 families.
- Reduce support given to long-term participants to encourage self-sufficiency.
- Explore working with beeswax through workshops and training.
- Expand hives so families are able to sell more and eventually become self-sustaining.
- Look at new techniques for managing larger amounts of data, processes and information to oversee the growing initiative.

	Honey (lbs)	Hives
<b>Family 1</b>	5	1
<b>Family 2</b>	180	1
<b>Family 3</b>	375	2
<b>Family 4</b>	400	2
<b>Family 5</b>	1800	26
<b>Family 6</b>	382	4
<b>Family 7</b>	430	4
<b>Family 8</b>	350	4

“ We have replaced over 50% of sugar in our diet with honey.”

5 communities  
8 beekeepers  
44 hives  
3,922 lbs of honey

