



TV

UNITED NATIONS NATIONS UNIES

U.N. IN ACTION

Week of 10 April 2006
Programme No. 1004
Duration: 4'15"

LIQUID GOLD

VIDEO

FOREST

BEES

DON FAUSTINO MAY CAMAL,
ORGANIC HONEY PRODUCER

STREET SCENE

AUDIO

NARRATION

For centuries in the Mexican peninsula of Yucatan, Mayan bee-keepers have been using natural methods to harvest honey from the forest. (7.5)

Now, with fast-growing interest for organic products in the international market, this ancient tradition could be like liquid gold to some of the poorest and most isolated communities in the region. (12)

CAMAL: (SPANISH)

"We have been working organically for about five years now and we realized that it's almost like our ancestors did." (7.5)

NARRATION

In Rural Mexico where 40% of the population lives on just a few dollars a day, Don Faustino May Camal has been scratching out a living as a bee-keeper for most of his life. (11.5)

CAMAL ON-CAMERA

CAMAL: (SPANISH)

“At first, we were producing conventional honey but it wasn’t paying enough. Prices were too low.”
(6.5)

BEEKEEPERS AT WORK

NARRATION

Then local honey producers realized there were some similarities between their production methods and those certified as organic ... and how much more money they stood to earn if they could make the switch. (11.5)

PROCESSING HONEY

Making the switch from conventional to organic agricultural production is now believed to be one of the greatest hopes for reducing poverty among small farmers in poor, rural communities around the world. (12)

PAOLO SILVERI, IFAD
ON-CAMERA

SILVERI:

“A recent evaluation by IFAD shows that organic honey from Yucatan has been sold for prices up to 45 percent higher than conventional honey. However in order to access these markets farmers have to get organized into groups.” (13.5)

CAMAL ON-CAMERA

CAMAL: (In Spanish)

“One single person cannot go to sell their honey in Spain. It’s only as a group that we can provide the tonnage that they ask for. So we founded an association called Chilan Kabo’ob.” (13.5)

NARRATION

COUNTRYSIDE

The members of Chilan Kabo'ob, which means 'Ancient Bees' in Mayan, travel daily into the deep forest. (6)

COLLECTING POLLEN

Bees travel far and wide to collect pollen. So in order for the honey to be certified organic, they mustn't come in contact with any pollutants and hives have to be at least 3 km from any house or road. (12.5)

CHECKING HIVES

Ironically, some of the conditions that contribute to rural poverty, such as distance from urban centres and lack of technology, in this case actually prove to be positive pre-requisites for organic production. (12.5)

SILVERI ON-CAMERA

SILVERI:

"For once small farmers living in remote areas have an opportunity to turn liabilities into assets. They have a comparative advantage for not having spoiled their environment and having preserved their traditional values." (12)

NARRATION

EXTRACTING HONEY

But still, the switch to organic production does require some modern techniques, such as the use of stainless steel equipment to extract the honey. (7.5)

PROCESSING HONEY

Buying new knives and centrifuges is expensive and again being in a group is crucial. (5.5)

CAMAL ON-CAMERA	<p><u>CAMAL</u>: (SPANISH)</p> <p>“If we don’t have the resources to buy the equipment we need to work organically, we can ask the treasurer to give us what we need and he recoups the money when we bring in the product.”</p> <p>(10.5)</p>
WEIGHING HONEY	<p><u>NARRATION</u></p> <p>In the past, honey producers were at the mercy of unscrupulous traders who took the lion’s share of the proceeds. (6)</p>
CASHIER’S OFFICE	<p>Now the Chilan Kabo’ob group pays their members directly upon delivery and, when prices are low, store oversupply until they improve. (8.5)</p>
DON TRAVELLING THROUGH COUNTRYSIDE	<p>This year, Don Faustino and his group have produced over 25 tonnes of organic honey which will end up on supermarket shelves in Europe. A small start perhaps, but one which promises a brighter future for these Mayan farmers. (14)</p>
UN LOGO	<p>This report was prepared by James Heer for the United Nations. (3)</p>