

Dark bees in Finland

Dark bees came to Finland from Sweden when beekeeping was introduced here in 18th century

After several attempts a colony overwintered 1777

In the next century beekeeping stabilized and slowly expanded from Turku neighborhood

In latter part of the 19th century there was even some import of italian bees

(Maybe there had been bees before,
Climate in Middle ages was warmer
And there is in the finnish folk lore several poems about bees,
We don't know



Despite growing imports of mainly italian bees the dark ones remained dominant in most areas of country until sixties

At that time breeding of italian queens became expansive

As they had until today open mating it can be supposed that finnish italian bees have genes from dark bees



During next decades ligustica became dominant especially in the south, in the north carnica became common

The bottle neck was the end of nineties.

Two projects, one in Oulu region and one in southwestern islands made possible to find the bees from Väinö Mäki and led to breeding and mating of dark bees

The queen breeding station of beekeepers' association with artificial insemination was an important link between these

The help from swedish Nordbi people was necessary, besides advice breeding material from there was not to avoid inbreeding



Väinö Mäki



Oulu region project meeting, at the left Jukka Siekkinen, in the middle Stanislaw Honko, at the right Väinö Mäki and down Maritta Martikkala



**Ingvar Arvidsson from Sweden
very much thank you and
your colleagues!**



**Stanislaw Honko with Väinö
Mäki, Honko's artificial insemi-
nations made possible to
Forward dark bees to Aimo Nur-
minen**

Now there is one breeder, Aimo Nurminen, who mates the queens on an island

Yearly production 150-200 queens

About 30 beekeepers who have dark bees

About 300 dark bee colonies



We have own association which is member of the Finnish Beekeepers Association

Relationships to keepers of other bees are mainly good with some exceptions

From state we have support for this congress, but for our working we haven't got any public money until now

The dark bees are included in the agreement with beebreed made by beekeepers' association but it takes time to get people to make testing

There will be another island mating station close to Helsinki run by Markku Pöyhönen, hopefully next summer there will be produced queens for sale

We try to get more queen breeders to fulfil the demand and devide risks



**We must not forget drones
when breeding!**



Where is the mite?



Thank you for attention!