Breeding of honey bees has a long tradition in Germany. Intensive selection supported by scientific findings has led to a significant improvement of honey bee traits. Carnica stock available from breeders today stands out due to their high performance, gentleness, low swarming tendency and high resilience. By disclosure of all performance data in the beebreed database, the breeding efforts are transparent and visible for anyone in Germany, and abroad. The advantages of German Carnica breeding stock are also popular in the internet and frequently discussed in international beekeepers’ forums. In consequence, breeders – in particular the members of the AGT – observe a continuously increasing demand for queens, as beekeepers in many countries are not satisfied with the performance of their local stock and hope for advantages by using highly selected German Carnica stock.

While this development is a pleasing affirmation for successful breeding work, it also poses a serious threat to the conservation of endangered subspecies and ecotypes in many countries. The genetic diversity of subspecies and ecotypes, resulting from natural selection, is inevitably lost through the importation and introgression of foreign stock into the range of a native race. The resulting mixture of races is not necessarily better adapted to the prevailing environmental conditions.

A striking example is for instance the behavior of the Egyptian honey bee, *Apis mellifera lamarckii*, against attacks of the oriental hornet (*Vespa orientalis*). The native bee exhibits adaptive behavior that allow the colonies to cope with this dangerous predator that is prevalent in the Near and Middle East. Hybrids of the Egyptian bee and Carnica, however, helplessly fall prey to the hornet.

Another example can be observed in North Africa. While the Tell bee (*A.m. intermissa*) native to this region can cope with long periods without rain in summer, due to its adapted brood rhythm, Carnica and hybrid colonies develop rapidly in spring, but do not survive the long summer draught without nectar flow.

Native subspecies are adapted to the regional environmental conditions, pathogens and parasites. Obliterating these subspecies because of their currently still unsatisfactory apicultural performance and replacing or hybridizing them with an apiculturally selected but non-native bee, massively damages the global genetic diversity. In contrast – conservation of genetic diversity can be promoted by subjecting endangered subspecies to selection for apicultural traits, while conserving their adaptations to the local environment.

For this reason, and to protect endangered native populations, Carnica breeders - particularly the members of the AGT – have committed to market their queens only within EU countries, except Bulgaria, Greece, Ireland, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Sicily.

An identical recommendation has been enacted by the GdeB (Association of European Buckfast beekeepers) for their members.

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