



FIRST PERSON Sweet Success for Malawian Beekeeper

Radio program puts honey buyer in touch with beekeepers

Mark Masalimo is a 25-year-old Malawian from Chikwawa district in southern Malawi. It used to take him over three months to sell his 1.5 tons of honey at local markets.



Mark Masalimo harvests honey at his apiary in Chikwawa, southern Malawi.

Anthony Mukumbwa told a USAID-sponsored radio program that he would send trucks to buy honey from anyone in Malawi who could put together a half ton of honey. Mark Masalimo took him up on the offer and tripled his yearly income.

Then one day, he listened to *Chuma Chobisika*, or Hidden Treasure, a popular USAID-supported radio program that promotes sustainable harvesting of natural resources. The president of a Malawian company, Eco-Products Ltd, was featured on the program. Anthony Mukumbwa described his company's efforts in northern Malawi to organize beekeepers so that they would sell honey in high volumes. Consolidating honey supplies lowered the cost of transporting that honey from rural areas.

Photo: USAID/Eric Nuedel

This addressed a problem that many small beekeepers face: one beekeeper usually does not have enough honey to access profitable markets. During the interview, Mukumbwa said that any group anywhere in Malawi that could put together half a ton of honey could call him, and he would send his trucks to purchase the honey. Mark and many others took him up on his offer. Mukumbwa later reported that his phone rang regularly with honey producers over the weeks following the interview.

Mark made a deal with Eco-Products to sell all of his honey. This reduced the time and money he normally spent marketing honey and more than tripled his income, from \$560 in 2004 to \$1875 in 2005. For Mark, this was the first of many sweet successes that awaited his honey business.