Small Business and Entrepreneurship

Beekeeper Daniel Adesina Oduntan has showcased his love for bees in Ogun State and globally. He is supporting the beekeeping movement in the United States (US) where he has relocated. Oduntan, a Master's degree holder in Entomology, is promoting sustainable beekeeping. DANIEL ESSIET reports.

Raising successful beekeepers

Chief Executive Officer, Bee-Craft Consult, Greater Salt Lake City Area, United States (US), Daniel Oduntan, is one of the internationally recognised beekeepers, who has come out of Nigeria and has taken the industry by storm. The German-trained queen bee breeder-cum-apitherapist, is on a mission to encourage commercial beekeeping in Nigeria.

With over 25 years' experience in the business, Oduntan is also a trainer and resource person in Nigeria and the US. While in Abeokuta, the Ogun State capital, Oduntan established the Institute of Vocational Bee Craft to train people in commercial beekeeping. He also trains growers and smallholders. At a point in time, he was one of the major trainers in the country.

Beekeeping has not only increased his income level significantly, it has also enabled him to provide employment to many youths. His farm produces honey and bee-free fries. It provides entrepreneurship and supports market linkage, giving input on new technology for honey-processing and extracting to farmers.

While in the US, Oduntan founded Bee-Craft Consult, with a vision to be a "worthy example for making a living through beekeeping, empowering others, and sustaining our natural environment.

Speaking with The Nation, Oduntan said beekeeping is a thriving endeavour, which can help raise income level of local entrepreneurs and create employment for youths.

He said he was ready to train more Nigerians on commercial beekeeping through online classes and hands-on demonstration classes.

Since arriving in the US, Oduntan's work has led him to European countries, such as Germany, Italy and Austria, with exceptional beekeeping practices. He has expanded his knowledge and improved his skills, increasing his passion for beekeeping in Utah, US.

Oduntan noted that while beekeeping has become more popular in recent years, it continues to be a profitable endeavour.

Besides honey, he maintained that there are other streams of revenue connected to beekeeping. According to him, learning to manage the honey bee helps provide an income through improved quality and quantity of produce. He added that learning to manage hives was critical for the sustainability of the business.

Each beekeeper, he explained, could produce a lot of honey, but it depends on various factors, such as location, weather, temperature, pests, and local flora.

According to him, with better management, some hives can produce larger amount with proper management. Oduntan said a hive can become profitable, especially if the beekeeper is willing to consider other streams of revenue.

During trainings, Oduntan exposed participants to the potential of bee products, which can be converted to products such as candles, soap, and lip balm. He also trains people on how to produce bee pollen, which provides health-related benefits such as mitigating seasonal allergies, treat osteoporosis, and serves as an antioxidant.

According to him, beekeepers should balance their costs and benefits, stressing that knowledge is important as beekeeping is changing faster.

He urged entrepreneurs to read, attend beekeeping association meetings and classes, visit beekeeping websites, and establish a relationship with an experienced beekeeper.

Oduntan is now trying new flavours and products, improving quality analysis, providing additional beekeeping services, and investing in new equipment.