Boštjan Noč

Boštjan Noč was born in 1974 in Žirovnica, less than a kilometre away from the birthplace of one of the most renowned beekeepers Anton Janša. I practically grew up with bees, as beekeeping has been a tradition in the Noč family for several generations. I have been keeping bees since I was 13 years old, when I started with five bee colonies. At the age of 18, I was already responsible for over 80 colonies. As years passed, their numbers grew steadily, and in 2024, I prepared almost 400 honeybee colonies for winter. In my beekeeping practice, I exclusively use AŽ-beehives and Carniolan honeybees. I produce various types of honey, pollen, propolis, wax, foodstuffs from bee products, sparkling honey wine, cosmetics from bee products, etc. In recent years, I have been placing great emphasis on the production of European-protected Slovenian honey with a protected geographical indication in the top-quality scheme and on the gift programme of bee products.

In 2002, I tried myself in a more "official" role for the first time, as I was one of the initiators for the establishment of the Upper Gorenjska Beekeepers' Association (later renamed to Gorenjska Beekeepers' Association), becoming its first-ever president. In 2004, I became the vice president of the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association, and in 2007 its president. I have been presiding over it for more than 17 years.

These 17 years were marked by joint projects of Slovenian beekeepers, such as World Bee Day, the placement of Slovenian beekeeping on the UNESCO list of intangible cultural heritage, Slovenian food day, national and European honey breakfast, glass for bee products of Slovenian beekeepers, Slovenian honey drink bottle, uniform honey labels and stickers, promotion of beekeeping and the increase in annual honey consumption to more than 2 kg per Slovene (statistical data from the honey breakfast survey, which represents a doubling of honey consumption in 10 years), honey price increase (when entering the EU, the highest price on the market for beekeepers was little over EUR 3.00 (SIT 900) for 900 g – currently the price is around EUR 15.00), various free training programmes for beekeepers, numerous free courses for beginners, national apitherapy license, national beekeeper license, beekeeping as an elective subject in primary schools, numerous promotional lectures for the general public and training for beekeepers, apitourism (certified beekeeping tourism), Apimedica & Apiquality 2010, ApiSlovenija Celje, organisation of international professional conferences, renovation of old beehives, publication of numerous professional publications (monograph on Slovenian beekeeping, the book Veliki ljudje slovenskega čebelarstva (Slovenian Beekeeping Greats), etc.) and films, participation in fairs such as AGRA with a beekeeping day, training disabled people in wheelchairs in a modified learning apiary and by issuing a beekeeping manual, introducing beekeeping for people with special needs, evaluating honey and honey drinks, planting honey plants – the well-received project Preserve bees – »We reap what we sow« (project of planting buckwheat, sunflowers and pumpkins), planting linden and other honey trees in each municipality, at the birth of a child…, obtained EU protection for Slovenian honey with a protected geographical indication, promotion of quality schemes, fighting against systemically harmful pesticides for bees and joint success in this area together with MKGP, when we were the first in the EU to ban neonicotinoids, beekeeping classes and competitions for young beekeepers at the national and international level, setting-up of more than 30 educational apiaries at schools, issuing promotional and educational materials, providing co-financing for beekeeping equipment and co-financing for queen breeders, research and development work of ČZS, implementation of a concession for the Public Advisory Service in beekeeping, observation and forecasting service for honeydew secretion and breeding programmes, construction and establishment of a beekeeping library at ČZS, establishment of a laboratory at ČZS, construction of a beekeeping learning trail next to the Beekeeping Centre of Slovenia, which is adapted also for the blind and visually impaired, issuance of the World Bee Day coin, the 20 bees silver coin, setting up a memorial for the Carniolan honeybee and opening the House of the Carniolan honeybee in Višnja Gora, renovation of the commemorative Anton Janša plaque in Vienna and the addition of a new one in Slovenian language, handover of an apiary to the Pope in the Vatican, setting up apiaries for the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, at the UN headquarters in New York, in Trieste, Austrian Carinthia and Hungary, installation of educational apiaries for the purpose of providing education and training of beekeepers in several regions, a 3D Carniolan honeybee measuring almost 1 metre, design of a honey story pavilion, VR beekeeping applications and many others. At my initiative, the state of Slovenia proposed to the EU an amendment to the honey labeling directive, namely that every jar of honey must have an accurate indication of the honey's origin. This was also adopted by the European Parliament in April 2024.

I have written two books, the book Rojen za čebele (Born for Bees) and the manual Dobra čebelarska praksa (Good Beekeeping Practice), and I was one of the three main authors of the book Brez čebel ne bo življenja (Without Bees There Will Be No Life).

I am the initiator and the first representative of a consortium of European-protected Slovenian food products and products.

I am also a beekeeping lecturer on the following topics:

* Breeding queens for non-commercial use and basic selection in the Boštjan NOČ beehive
* Beekeeping in AŽ-beehives up to the first pasture, forming spare families and adding queens
* Beekeeping throughout the year with an emphasis on interrupting the egg laying phase and facilitating the management of varroa mites
* Slovenian beekeeping
* Good beekeeping practice
* Pollen extraction technology

I have received numerous accolades for my work, such as:

* International Golden Bee Award (2022)
* all highest decorations of the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association – 1st, 2nd and 3rd class Anton Janša Award,
* medal of merit from the President of the Republic of Slovenia Borut Pahor (2018) – for contribution to the development of beekeeping and sustainable agriculture and to maintaining balance in nature,
* protocol flag of the Republic of Slovenia – awarded by the President of the Republic of Slovenia, Borut Pahor (2017),
* Silver medal at Apimondia 2017 in Turkey as co-author of the book No Bees, No Life
* title of honorary citizen of the municipality of Žirovnica (2018),
* plaque from the municipality of Žirovnica (2012),
* title of ambassador of the municipality of Ivančna Gorica (2022)
* miniature Janša beehive (2005) – the highest award of the Upper Gorenjska Beekeeping Association,
* Beekeeper of the Year award of the Upper Gorenjska Beekeeping Association (2015),
* plaque from the Gorenjska Beekeeping Association (2015)
* the highest award of the Beekeeping Association of Serbia (2011),
* plaque of the National Council of the Republic of Slovenia for Volunteering (2011),
* Knight of the Bee Queen Award (2011), awarded by the Italian NGO U.C.E.P.E,
* Golden Glavar award of the Peter Pavle Glavar Regional Association (2021),
* Crystal Triglav – award of the Slovenian Travel Press association for remarkable achievements in tourism (2018),
* plaque of Dr. Filip Terč for help and efforts in legalizing apitherapy (2017),
* Pislak award – Association of Professional Beekeepers of Slovenia (2018),
* Special UPU PGŽ award – for helping those affected by the earthquake in Banovina (2021)