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Body size and resource fluctuation in stingless bees (Apidae, Meliponini)

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The resource fluctuation in the environment as well the food stores of the colonies are important factors that influence stingless bee biology, particularly the body size of individuals. In this group, body size is a relevant feature, correlated with the foraging range of individuals and colonies, and also with the food gathering capacities of individuals. In this presentation we show that worker body size in [*Melipona flavolineata*], an Amazonian stingless bee, has a seasonal plasticity; in the rainy, dearth period, workers experience a diminishing in their intertegular distance, but also have an increment on their corbiculae size. In the dry season, which is the richer period for colonies, with more resources in the environment, workers have an increment on intertegular distance but have the area of the corbiculae diminished. This pattern results in workers flying smaller distances in the rainy season, but being able to collect more pollen per unity of weight. In the richer dry season, workers can explore can collect more pollen in each foraging trip, but since they can explore larger areas, this allometric variation on body size helps the colonies to restore their food stores.