

Honey Supply UK Legislative Overview

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Overview



- Domestic landscape
- Enforcement
- International Standards



Rules controlling honey in England



The Honey (England) Regulations 2015 provide the basis for marketing of honey to consumers but others are also relevant.

- The Food Safety Act 1990
- Retained General Food law 178/2002
- Retained Food Information to Consumers (FIC) 1169/2009
- Other rules: Contaminants, vet medicines, POAO

Largely equivalent honey legislation also applies in Scotland, Wales (& Northern Ireland)

- NIP means EU rules still apply in NI
- EU exit changes for honey slight differences between the nations relating to blended honey labelling

Directive 2001/110 and Directive 2014/63/EU

 UK requirements largely based on previous EU rules in place before exit. Over time may see divergence.

Honey Legislation



Why have specific rules on honey?

KEY Aims:

- To protect the use of the reserved description "honey" by setting a minimum expected compositional standard for our market
- Consumer protection instil consumer confidence in UK that the honey is what it says it is
- To create a level playing field for industry and fair trading
- To prevent misleading or fraudulent practices on our market

2015 Honey England Regulations



- Covers Honey from the Apis mellifera (European honey bee)
- Lays down reserved descriptions that must be used which relate to:
 - the source from which the honey is obtained (e.g. blossom, honeydew)
 - the processes by which it is extracted (e.g. drained, extracted)
 - the way it is presented (e.g. comb, chunk honey, filtered honey, baker's honey).

Honey Specifications



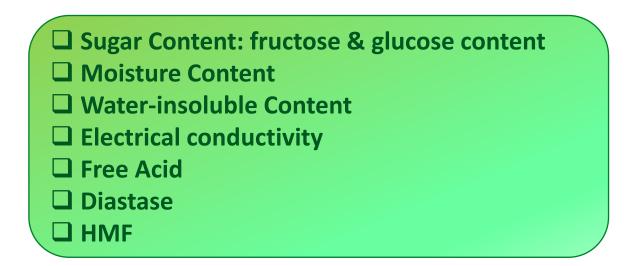
Honey must comply with set specifications:

- 1. Range of general quality criteria for honey focussed around its colour, consistency, flavour and aroma.
- No additions except for other honey, and no pollen or constituent particular to honey may be removed except where this is unavoidable in the removal of foreign inorganic or organic matter
- Free from organic or inorganic matters foreign to its composition.
- It must not—
 - (a) have any foreign tastes or odours;
 - (b) have begun to ferment;
 - (c) have an artificially changed acidity;
 - (d) have been heated in such a way that the natural enzymes have been either destroyed or significantly inactivated.

Honey Specifications



2. Set of specific compositional requirements including set prescribed levels for :



• If you use one of the reserved descriptions as set out in the regulations: your product *must* comply with the definitions and above defined compositional criteria.

Honey labelling



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- General food labelling rules apply to all honey
- Honey also has mandatory country(s) of origin labelling
- For Blended honey as an alternative to listing the various countries 'blend of honeys from more than one country'* (or similar wording) can be used.

- **Northern Ireland adheres to EU rules so must use Blend of EU/ Non EU honey etc
- Optional labelling
- A **floral or vegetable** origin but it must come <u>wholly or mainly</u> from that source and possesses the organoleptic, physico-chemical and microscopic characteristics of the source
- A regional, territorial or topographical origin but it must come entirely from that origin

NB In England and Wales Regional descriptors such as EU/Non EU origin could be additionally used under the optional alternatives to ensure a label complies with ALL nations requirements for imports

^{*}New wording applies in England, Scotland and Wales from 1 Oct 22; Scotland additionally allows regional descriptors so EU/ Non EU terminology allowed

Honey Enforcement

- FSA have oversight for food enforcement policy
- Rules are enforced on the ground by local authorities such as TSOs, EHOs, PHAs who adopt a risk-based approach on enforcement.
- Improvement notice approach with backstop criminal sanctions for failure to comply.
- Product of Animal Origin (POAO) imports subject to mandatory checks (100% documentary; 15% min additional checks) by PHA
- Key quality indictors (HMF, diastase etc) are set in honey rules; other non
 permitted additions such as added sugars are not specifically provided for but
 implicit in the rules;

"No pollen or constituent particular to honey may be removed except where this is unavoidable in the removal of foreign inorganic or organic matter"

- Honey is a complex matrix and analysis can be challenging
- A weight of evidence approach is recommended for determining if exogenous sugars are present traceability checks / follow up investigations.

International Honey Standards



CODEX STANDARD FOR HONEY - CODEX STAN 12-1981

- Adopted in 1981; revised 1987 and 2001 under the auspices of the Codex Committee on Sugars (CCS)
- The Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) is a Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) / World Health Organisation (WHO) sponsored body charged with the development of food standards to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practice in international trade of food and agricultural products.
- **UK hold the chair of the CAC currently.** Input to Codex standards is important as they serve as a basis for national law in many cases. Codex standards can be referred to by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to **settle disputes** between countries.

Codex Honey Standard



- applies to <u>all</u> honeys produced by honeybees and covers all styles of honey presentation which are offered for direct consumption.
- Establishes naming, chemical properties, level of contaminants, and labelling of honey, and other characteristics.
- Its coverage is wider than EU directive given its international focus and covers honey obtained from <u>honeybees</u> and is not exclusive to *Apis Mellifera* (European honeybee)
- Origin labelling is optional
- Industrial honey to be developed



Other work on honey standards

- ISO/ BSI Bee Products Committee new work on developing standards for honey; work on definitions, terminology and analytical methods
- CEN focus on methods and authenticity
- Country specific rules: EU, US, Australia, New Zealand...

Interested Parties which help shape honey rules in this area include:

- ➤ BBKA British beekeepers
- > BBFA British Bee Farmers
- > HIPA / Honey Association UK honey packers
- ➤ Apimondia International beekeepers associations
- > EPBA European Professional Beekeepers
- ➤ Copacogeca European Bee farmers

Any follow up Questions or Queries

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Thank you very much for listening

