

PART 2

COMPOSITION & LABELLING

Introduction

The following is a summary of the Regulations relating to composition and labelling of honey. For the full text, refer to the Regulations.

(a) THE HONEY (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 1976

Definitions of Honey:

The definitions are:

"Blossom Honey" means honey produced solely or mainly from the nectar of blossoms.

"Honeydew Honey" means honey the colour of which is light brown, greenish brown, black or any intermediate colour produced wholly or mainly from secretions of or found on living parts of plants other than blossoms.

"Comb Honey" means honey stored by honeybees in the cells of freshly built broodless combs and intended to be sold in sealed whole combs or in parts of such combs.

"Chunk Honey" means honey which contains at least one piece of comb honey.

"Drained Honey" means honey obtained by draining, uncapped broodless honey combs.

"Extracted Honey" means honey obtained by centrifuging uncapped, broodless honey combs.

"Pressed Honey" means honey obtained by pressing broodless honey combs with or without the application of moderate heat.

(b) REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COMPOSITION OF HONEY

Nothing shall be added to honey other than honey (honeycomb is permitted when selling chunk honey).

Honey must, as far as is practicable, be free from mould, insects, insect debris, brood or any other organic or inorganic substance foreign to the honey.

The acidity must not be changed.

Moisture content of honey:-

Honey from any species of the genus *Calluna* or *Trifolium* should not have a moisture content in excess of 23%. Other honeys should have a moisture content of less than 21 %. Honey being used for baking or industrial purposes where a moisture content is a result of natural conditions, may have a moisture content of up to 25%.

The honey, unless used for baking or industrial purposes, should have no foreign tastes, odours or

have begun to ferment or effervesce or have been heated to the extent to destroy the natural enzymes. The diastase activity unless used for baking or industrial purposes should be not less than 4 unless the honey is citrus honey or has a naturally low enzyme content.

The honey, unless used for baking or industrial purposes, must not have a hydroxymethylfurfural (HMF) content of more than 80 milligrams per kilogram.

Apparent reducing sugar content should be not less than 65% other than honeydew or a blend of honeydew and blossom honey which may be 60%.

Apparent sucrose content should be not more than 5% other than honeydew or a blend of honeydew, blossom and some other specified honeys which may be not more than 10%.

Water insoluble solids content of not more than 0.5% in pressed honey. Other honeys should be not more than 0.1%.

The ash content of honeydew and a blend of honeydew and blossom honey should not exceed 1 %. In other honeys, this should not exceed 0.6%.

(c) LABELLING AND DESCRIPTION OF HONEY

All honey must be properly labelled. In the case of comb honey or chunk honey, these words may precede the word "honey".

The label should contain the name, trade name, address or registered office of the producer or packer of the honey.

(d) REFERENCES TO ORIGIN

Labels should not include a reference direct or indirect in words or by means of pictorial advice to the blossom or plant origin of the honey or to the regional, topographical or territorial origin of the honey unless:

(1) in the case of a reference to the blossom or plant origin, the honey is derived wholly or mainly from the blossom or plant indicated; and

(2) in the case of a reference to a regional, topographical or territorial origin the honey originated wholly in the region, place or territory indicated.

(e) MANNER OF MARKING OR LABELLING

Any statement shall be:

- a. clear, legible and indelible
- b. securely attached and easy to read
- c. shall not be interrupted by anything likely to mislead the purchaser as to the nature of the honey.
- d. shall not be in any way hidden or obscured or reduced in conspicuousness by any other matter whether pictorial or not appearing on the label.

- e. the height of the letters shall not be calculated by any undue or insufficient prominence to mislead as to the nature, substance or quality of the honey.

(f) THE LOT MARKING (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 1996

These Regulations amend the Food (Lot Marking) Regulations 1992 by using simpler, clearer language and adhering more to the requirements of the Directive. They do not, however, change the requirements of the Regulations. These require that, with the exception of farm gate sales, each lot must be marked. The size of the lot and the form of the lot mark are up to the beekeeper but it must be clearly visible, legible and indelible and preceded by the letter "L". As an alternative to the use of the lot marking, honey can be marked with a 'Best Before' date although it is stressed that there is no legal requirement to date mark honey. Some retail outlets may require date marking, irrespective of the legal position and this remains their prerogative when accepting honey for sale.

To enable you to trace the lots in the event of product failure, a record should be kept to show the distribution to retail outlets. This can be quite easily achieved by marking on the invoice and by using a proforma of a type contained at Appendix B.

(g) THE FOOD LABELLING REGULATIONS 1996

Part 2 of the Regulations does not apply to honey as defined in the Honey Regulations 1976. This means that honey is exempt from those sections which relate to date coding. However, you may still wish to date code in preference to using a Lot Mark.