



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba



SRUC

HONEY REGULATIONS

BEEKEEPING MODULES

These presentations are funded by the Scottish Government as part of Scotland's Honey Bee Health Strategy

This presentation is part of a suite developed by the Scottish Government and SRUC to provide local associations advice and information on statutory beekeeping requirements, best practice, and how the Scottish Government provides support to Scottish beekeepers.



Aims and Objectives

To provide advice and information relating to the regulation of honey

You are required to ensure that you are providing a safe product for human consumption. There are a number of rules and regulations governing the production and labelling of honey products to ensure that the consumer is able to trust that the item correctly identifies its production and origin, and that is safe to consume. The picture shows a frame of ripe honey sealed with wax.

The Honey (Scotland) Regulations 2015

"Regulate the use of the names of several types of honey and prescribe compositional criteria with which honey products must comply when placed on the market as honey, and when used as honey in a product intended for human consumption."



The Honey (Scotland) Regulations 2015 set out the legal requirements which must be adhered to in order to legally sell honey to the public. They can be found by clicking on the QR code or link at the end of the presentation. Please ensure that you familiarise yourself with them. The picture shows a honey sample being taken

You can only label your honey accurately as one of the following

baker's honey

blossom honey

chunk honey

comb honey

cut comb in honey

drained honey

extracted honey

filtered honey

nectar honey

pressed honey

A person must not use the name "honey" in trade as the name of a product if the product is not honey.

There are more details in the honey regulations but put simply you need to be accurate in describing your honey. The word "raw" has been widely debated but not recommended as is "organic" as it is difficult to prove. You cannot call a honey specifically from one source unless the product comes wholly or mainly from the indicated source. Eg Lime, Heather, Oil Seed Rape.

Water content



Picture LJohnston

Honey (except heather honey) should not have a water content greater than 20%.

Heather honey water content should not be greater than 23%

There are rules regarding the water content of the honey and the temperature at which the honey may be heated.

If there is too much water, honey is liable to **ferment**, resulting in an unsafe product.

The water content for blossom honey is specified as **not to be greater than 20%**.

Heather honey, because it is gathered late season when the bees find it harder to reduce the water content themselves, the limit **is 23%**.

Overheating the honey can increase levels of Hydroxymethylfurfural (HMF). HMF is important because, at high levels, it is toxic for humans. There are legal limits on the levels of HMF in honey sold for human consumption which is why it is specified that it should not be heated more than 35°C . Honey naturally crystallises but gentle warming will restore it to being runny.

Country of Origin



- Honey must be labelled with the country in which harvested. e.g., 'Produce of Scotland'
- Where the honey is a blend of honeys harvested from more than one country, as an alternative to listing the various countries of origin one of the following statements may be used as appropriate:
 - 'Blend of EU honeys', 'Blend of non-EU honeys', 'Blend of EU and non-EU honeys'.
- If reference is made to a regional, territorial, or topographical origin the honey must come from that country, county, or place e.g. Dumfriesshire honey.

You must include the country of Origin and be clear if it is a blend of honeys. Regional honeys must come entirely from that region.

Composition of honey



1. The honey consists essentially of different sugars, fructose and glucose as well as other substances such as organic acids, enzymes and solid particles derived from honey collection.
2. The colour varies from nearly colourless to dark brown.
3. The consistency can be fluid, viscous or partly or entirely crystallised.
4. The flavour and aroma vary but are derived from the plant origin.
5. No food ingredient has been added, including any food additive.
6. No other additions have been made to the honey except for other honey.
7. It must, as far as possible, be free from organic or inorganic matters foreign to its composition.

Honey Regulations

Food Standards Scotland are responsible for:

- ▶ Regulation and legislation
- ▶ Labelling and composition



Report any concerns with compliance, food fraud or residues to :

- Scottish Food Crime Hotline ([0800 028 7926](tel:08000287926)), in partnership with Crimestoppers. The hotline is free and anonymous.
- [online webform](#).
- If you would prefer to speak with a Food Crime team member in confidence, you can email foodcrime@fss.scot.

Food Standards Scotland have responsibility for ensuring that food produced meets the regulations and standards set out to ensure public health and safety.

If you have any concerns, then you can report them to the FSS for investigation.

Inspectors take several honey samples a year. It is important to keep your medicines records for 5 years as they will be asked for if you are chosen to take a sample from.

Honey 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.

The legislation also states:

"pressed honey means honey obtained by pressing broodless combs with or without the application of moderate heat not exceeding 45 degrees Celcius.

It is recommended not to heat honey above this as it may increase Diastase activity and hydroxymethylfurfural content (HMF levels)



This suggest beekeepers should not heat honey above 45 degrees celcius as it can increase levels of HMF and destroy natural enzymes in the honey. Please see the regulations for more detail on HMF levels.



The Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland (REHIS)

Many retailers and markets look for vendors to have a food health certificate.

REHIS is an awarding body in Scotland for qualifications in food hygiene, food and health, HACCP, control of infection, occupational health and first aid.

The website below will take you to advice on how to find courses and get qualified in the area's mentioned above.

[Training Courses and Qualifications - REHIS](#)



VMD Medicine Records

- ▶ You are required by law to keep medicine records for at least 5 years. You may be asked to present them on request by an inspector.
- ▶ If you have a honey sample taken you will be asked for your records.
- ▶ You can find an example from BeeBase here:
- ▶ [Fact_28_Veterinary_Medicine_Administration_Record.pdf](#)

You can find more information in the varroa and legislation powerpoint



Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP)

If you sell honey in a shop or have a small business it is recommended you have a HACCP.

The weblink below will give advice on how to manage the food hygiene and safety procedures in your food business.

[Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point \(HACCP\) | Food Standards Agency](#)

It is important to have food safety management procedure that are appropriate for the size and scale of your business



Weights and Measures Inspections

It is possible you may get a visit from weights and measures to check the weight of the honey in the Jar is consistent with the label.

You can find more guidance here:

[Weights and Measures Act 1985](#)



Third party insurance

Organisations such as the Scottish Beekeepers Association and the Bee Farmers Association, as well as independent insurers offer third party insurance cover.

Most retailers and markets require evidence of this in order to sell your honey

You should read your policy carefully to see what it does and does not cover.

[Insurance & Compensation - Scottish Beekeepers Association - Our purpose is to support honey bees and beekeepers in Scotland.](#)

[Membership Eligibility and Benefit - Bee Farmers Association](#)

Resources available: Scottish Government

Contact: Bees_Mailbox@gov.scot

[Scottish Honey Bee Health Legislation](#)

[The Honey \(Scotland\) Regulations 2015](#)

[Food Standards Scotland](#)



Here are some of the Government and SRUC resources available to you. If you have any queries you can contact the Honey Bee Health Team by email. Information about how the Scottish Government supports honey bees in Scotland can be found via the QR codes. SRUC podcasts on honey bee management can be found using the QR code.

BeeBase

- ▶ [BeeBase – Information for Scottish Beekeepers](#)
- ▶ [Live AFB Report » APHA - National Bee Unit – BeeBase](#)
- ▶ [Live EFB Report » APHA - National Bee Unit - BeeBase](#)



Here are some of the Government and SRUC resources available to you. If you have any queries you can contact the Honey Bee Health Team by email.

You can also find the links through google



Resources Available – Others

[Scottish Beekeepers Association](#)



[Bee Farmers Association](#)



Google should also take you to these sites



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BEEKEEPING GOVERNMENT TRAINING MODULES

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Thank you for listening