

Introduction

Govt. of India has notified export of Honey vide Principle order S.O. 276(E) dated 04th March 2002. The order prohibits the export of Honey by a unit in the course of international trade unless it conforms to the requirement of importing country. The order has stipulated the certain requirements related to food safety, residue, infrastructure and traceability requirements. However, to facilitate the export trade and to comply with the dynamic requirements of importing countries, some amendments have been issued from time to time.

For the sake of brevity and to facilitate the exporters, all the Orders & Notifications related to export of Honey have been compiled into one guide so that exporters need not to refer several Notifications to understand the requirements to execute an export consignment.

The Order & Notifications compiled in this guide has been reference in the end under the heading “Remarks” for reference purpose.

Compiled Orders & Notifications for export of Honey

Whereas, for the development of the export trade of India, certain proposals for subjecting honey to quality control and inspection prior to export were published as required by sub-rule(2) of rule 11 of the Export (Quality Control and Inspection) Rules, 1964 in the Gazette of India, Part II, section 3, sub-section (ii) dated the 26th May, 2001 vide S.O. 1097 dated the 11th May, 2001 of the Government of India in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Department of Commerce;

And whereas, objections and suggestions were invited from all persons likely to be affected thereby, within the period of forty five-days from the date the said Order is made available to the public;

And whereas the copies of the said Gazette were made available to the public on 8th June 2001.

And whereas the objections and suggestions received from the public on the said proposal have been considered by the Central Government;

Now, therefore, in exercise of powers conferred by section 6 of the Export (Quality Control and Inspection) Act, 1963 (22 of 1963), the Central Government after consulting the Export Inspection Council being of the opinion that it is necessary and expedient to do so, for the development of the export trade of India, hereby-

- (a) notifies that honey shall be subject to quality control and inspection prior to export;
- (b) specifies the type of quality control and inspection in accordance with the Export of Honey (Quality Control, Inspection and Monitoring) Rules, 2002, as the type of quality control, inspection and monitoring which shall be applied to such honey prior to export.
- (c) recognises the standards and procedures for drawing and testing of samples and other related matters which shall be as per the Schedule and Appendix appended to this Order.
- (d) prohibits the export, in the course of international trade of honey unless it conforms to the standard specifications applicable to it and is accompanied by a certificate of inspection or certificate that such unit is approved and monitored by any of agencies established under section 7 of the Export (Quality Control and Inspection) Act, 1963 (22 of 1963) including its sub-offices located at various places of the region.

2.Nothing in this Order shall apply to export by sea, land or air of samples of honey to prospective buyers, the value of which shall not exceed permissible limits laid down in exim policy from time to time and where no such provisions exists, the value shall not exceed Rs. 1000/ to prospective buyers.

SCHEDULE

Specifications for honey recognized as per clause (c) of section 6 of the Export (Quality Control and Inspection), Act 1963 shall be:-

- (a) National Standards of the importing countries.
- (b) Contractual specifications agreed to between the foreign buyer and the exporters provided the same is satisfying the health and other requirements of the importing country.
- (c) In the absence of (a) or (b) above, the minimum specifications notified in the order as per the Appendix hereunder.

APPENDIX

1. STANDARDS FOR EXPORTS OF HONEY:

1.1 Definition

(i) *Honey* is the natural sweet substance produced by the honey bees from the nectar of blossoms or secretions of living parts of plants and which the bees collect, transform, combine with specific substances of their own, deposit, dehydrate naturally and store and leave to mature and ripen in honey combs. This foodstuff may be fluid, viscous or crystallized;

(ii) *Extracted Honey* is the honey obtained only by centrifuging decapped broodless combs;

(iii) *Pressed Honey* is the honey obtained only by pressing broodless combs with or without the application of moderate heat;

(iv) *Drained Honey* is the honey obtained only by draining decapped broodless combs;

(v) *Blossom Honey* or *Nectar-Honey* is the honey which comes from nectars of plants;

(vi) *Honeydew Honey* is the honey, which comes mainly from excretions of plant sucking insects (Hemiptera) on the living parts of the plants or secretions of living parts of plants.

1.2 General Characteristics

Honey must be extracted from broodless combs and should be allowed to ripen naturally in the hive in sealed combs. The flavour and aroma would vary depending on the plant origin. However, it shall not:-

- have any foreign tastes or odours; or
- have begun to ferment or effervesce; or
- have been heated to such an extent that its natural enzymes are destroyed or made inactive; or
- have an artificially changed acidity; or
- contain substances in such quantity as to endanger human health.

1.3	Composition & Quality	Apiary/Extracted	Squeezed/Pressed/Drained
a)	Reducing Sugar Content(Min)	65%	65%
b)	Moisture content (Max)	20%	23%
c)	Fructose/Glucose (Min)	95%	0.95
d)	Water insoluble solids content	Not more than 0.1%	Not more than 0.5%
e)	Mineral substance (ash)	Not more than 0.5%	Not more than 0.6%
f)	Sucrose	5% maximum	5% maximum
g)	Acidity	Not more than 20 milli-equivalents acid per 1000gms(0.2 %)	Not more than 40 milli-equivalents acid per 1000 gms. (0.4%)
1.4	Diastase activity(Schade Scale)	Not less than 8 in general, not less than 3 for Honey with low natural enzyme content * & HMF & 15mg/Kg	Not less than 8 in general, not less than 3 for honey with low natural enzyme content* and HMF@ 15 mg/ kg.

1.5	Hydroxymethyl furfural content (HMF)	Not more than 20 mg/kg	Not more than 40 mg/kg
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*Low natural enzyme contents may be declared on the label.

1.6 Colour: Nearly colourless to dark brown.

1.7 Food additive: Not permitted

1.8 Veterinary drug, other Substances, environmental and other contaminants

Compounds	Unit	MRLs
(1) Drugs		
Streptomycin	ppb	0.02
Tetracycline	ppb	15
Chloramphenicol		Absent
Sulfonamide		Absent
Quinolones		Absent
(2) Organochlorine compounds		
Coumaphos (Perizin)	ppb	0.01
Amitraz	Ppb	0.01
Aldrin-As per Dieldrin	mg/kg	0.02
Chlorothalonil	mg/kg	0.01
Op-DDD	mg/kg	0.05
pp-DDD	mg/kg	0.05
Op-DDE	mg/kg	0.05
pp-DDE	mg/kg	0.05
Op-DDT	mg/kg	0.05
pp-DDT	mg/kg	0.05
Dicofol	mg/kg	0.05
Dieldrin	mg/kg	0.02
a-Endosulfan	mg/kg	0.1
Endosulfansulfate	mg/kg	0.005
Lindane	mg/kg	0.005
Gama HCH (all isomers)	mg/kg	0.03
Methoxychlor	mg/kg	0.01
PCBs	mg/kg	Absent
(3) Organophosphorous Compounds		

Chlorfenvinphos	mg/kg	0.005
Chlorpyriphos	mg/kg	0.005
Chlorpyriphos methyl	mg/kg	0.005
Diazinon	mg/kg	0.005
Ethion	mg/kg	0.005
Formothion	mg/kg	0.005
Malathion	mg/kg	0.005
Phosalone	mg/kg	0.005
Primiphos	mg/kg	0.005
Thiometon	mg/kg	0.005
Phorate	mg/kg	0.05
Pirimiphos methyl	mg/kg	0.05
(4)Carbamates	mg/kg	Absent
(5)Pyrethroid		
Cyfluthrin	mg/kg	0.02
Cypermethrin	mg/kg	0.05
Deltamethrin	mg/kg	0.05
Permethrin	mg/kg	0.05
Fenvelerate	mg/kg	0.02
Fluvalinate	mg/kg	0.005
(6)Heavy metals		
Lead	ppm	2
Copper	ppm	30
Arsenic	ppm	1.1
Tin	ppm	250
Zinc	ppm	50
Cadmium	ppm	1.5
Mercury	ppm	1
CH3Hg	Ppm	0.21

Provided that if the MRLs fixed by the importing countries are more stringent than the above prescribed limits, the standards specified by those countries shall be complied with.”

1.9 Freedom from foreign matter

Honey sold as such shall not have added to it any food ingredient or other substance. It shall be free from invert sugar or honey analogue. Honey shall not have any objectionable flavour, aroma or taint absorbed from foreign matter during its processing and storage. The honey shall not have begun to ferment or effervescence. Filtration is permitted to remove objectionable matter provided sufficient pollen grains which characterise the honey are retained.

Notification

In exercise of the powers conferred by Clause (d) of sub section 2 of section 17 of the Export (Quality Control and Inspection) Act, 1963 (22 of 1963), the Central Government hereby makes the following rules, namely:-

1. **Short title and commencement** – (1) These rules may be called the Export of Honey (Quality Control, Inspection and Monitoring) Rules, 2002.

(2) They shall come into force on the date of their publication in the Official Gazette.

2. **Definitions** – In these rules, unless the context otherwise requires –

(a) **“Act”** means the Export (Quality Control and Inspection) Act, 1963 (22 of 1963);

(b) **“Agency”** means any of the Export Inspection Agencies established by the Central Government at Mumbai, Kolkata, Kochi, Delhi and Chennai under section 7 of the Act for inspection including its sub-offices located at various places of the region;

(c) **“Council”** means the Export Inspection Council established under section 3 of the Act,

(d) **“Batch”** means a quality of honey, which have been prepared under the same conditions and in particular treated in single continuous operation;

(e) **“Certificate”** means certificate issued under sub-section (3) of section 7 of the Act;

(f) **“Collection Centre”** means an establishment where honey is collected.

(g) **“Country of Dispatch”** means India;

(h) **“Country of Destination”** means the country to which honey is dispatched from India,

(i) **“Placing on the market”** means the stocking or display with a view to sale, offering for sale, delivery or any other manner of disposal with the exception of retail sale, which must be subject to the checks laid down by national rules for retail business;

(j) **“Competent Authority”** means any one of the Export Inspection Agencies at Mumbai, Kolkata, Kochi, Delhi and Chennai established under section 7 of the Export (Quality Control and Inspection) Act, 1963;

(k) “**Establishment**” means any premises where honey is prepared, processed, packaged or stored.

“(l) “**Bee Keeper**” means any individual or group of individuals, involved in and practicing beekeeping and having at least ten honey bee colonies, each of ten frames, of *Apis mellifera* / *A. cerana* / *A. trigona* (Stingless), in manmade / wooden beehives;

(m) “**Beekeeping Company**” means any company incorporated under the Companies Act 1956, involved in and practicing beekeeping and having at least ten honey bee colonies, each of ten frames, of *Apis mellifera* / *A. cerana* / *A. trigona* (Stingless), in manmade / wooden beehives;

(n) “**Beekeeping Firm**” means any enterprise run under proprietorship or partnership basis, involved in and practicing beekeeping and having at least ten honey bee colonies, each of ten frames, of *Apis mellifera* / *A. cerana* / *A. trigona* (Stingless), in manmade / wooden beehives;

(o) “**Beekeeping Cooperative Society**” means any Cooperative Society / Society registered under the Societies Act 1860, involved in and practicing beekeeping and having at least ten honey bee colonies, each of ten frames, of *Apis mellifera* / *A. cerana* / *A. trigona* (Stingless), in manmade / wooden beehives;

(p) “**Registering Authority**” means any authority recognised / authorised / designated by the Competent Authority to register Bee Keeper / Beekeeping Company / Beekeeping Firm / Beekeeping Cooperative Society.”

3. Basis of compliance. – The quality control and inspection of honey shall be carried out as follows:-

(a) The honey intended for export shall be procured from registered Bee Keeper and or Beekeeping Company and or Beekeeping Firm and or Beekeeping Cooperative Society and handled at all stages of production, storage and transport based on good manufacturing practices (GMP) and good hygienic practices (GHP).

(b) It is primary responsibility of the Bee Keeper, Beekeeping Company, Beekeeping Firm, Beekeeping Cooperative Society to ensure that honey intended for export is collected and handled at all stages of collection, storage and transportation following good hygienic practices and good beekeeping practices so as to meet the health requirements laid down under these rules.

(c) Inspection of Honey intended for export shall be carried out with a view to ensuring that the same conforms to the specifications recognized by the Central Government under section 6 of the Act either-

(i) by ensuring that during the process of production, measures stipulated under sub rule 4.1 of rule 4 are complied with; or

(ii) on the basis of Inspection and testing carried out in accordance with sub rule 4.2 of rule 4.”

4. Procedure of Quality Control and Inspection

4.1 The procedure to be followed for compliance under clause (a) of rule 3 shall be as under:-

4.1 The procedure to be followed for compliance under clause (i) of sub rule (c) of rule 3 shall be as under:-

(1) It is primary responsibility of the establishment to ensure that honey intended is processed and handled at all stages of production, storage and transport following good hygienic practices and good manufacturing practices so as to ensure that the same conforms to specifications given in the order by the Central Government under section 6 of the Act.”;

(2) Any statutory restrictions imposed by any State / Central Government with respect to commercial or environmental or conservation measures from time to time shall be strictly adhered to.

(3) Having satisfied itself that the Beekeeper, Beekeeping Company, Beekeeping Firm, Beekeeping Cooperative Society establishment meet the requirements with regard to nature of activities they carry out, the Competent Authority shall accord approval to such Beekeeper, Beekeeping Company, Beekeeping Firm, Beekeeping Cooperative Society establishment.

(4) The Competent Authority may take the assistance of representatives from Agricultural and Processed Food Export Development Authority (APEDA), Department of Food Processing Industry and Ministry of Agriculture in the matter of approval of establishments.

(5) The Competent Authority shall take necessary measures if the requirements cease to be met.

(6) The Council shall draw up a list of approved establishments, each of which shall have an official number.

(7) The Competent Authority shall conduct regular monitoring of the Bee Keeper, Beekeeping Company, Beekeeping Firm, Beekeeping Cooperative Society and Establishments to ensure that good hygienic practices and good beekeeping practices are adopted by Bee Keeper, Beekeeping Company, Beekeeping Firm, Beekeeping Cooperative Society and good manufacturing practices and good hygienic practices are

adopted by the establishment at all stages of production, storage and transport of honey. For effective monitoring of the scheme, the Council shall issue necessary instruction in this regard.”

(8) The Council may seek the assistance of the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) or any other organisation approved by it for residue monitoring.”

(9) For carrying out inspection and monitoring of Beekeeper, Beekeeping Company, Beekeeping Firm, Beekeeping Cooperative Society, and Establishment, the component Authority shall have free access, at all times, to all parts of the Beekeeper, Beekeeping Company, Beekeeping Firm, Beekeeping Cooperative Society, Establishment and records pertaining to application of this notification in order to ensure compliance with the requirement of this notification.”

4.2 The procedure of inspection under clause (ii) sub rule (c) of rule 3 shall be carried out as under:-“

- (1) An exporter intending to export a consignment of honey shall give intimation in writing to the Agency furnishing therein only the technical specifications alongwith a copy of the export contract blanking out pricing and other details.
- (2) Every intimation under sub-rule (1) shall be given not less than two days before the inspection is to be carried out at the premises situated at the same station where the offices of the Agency is located; and not less than five days before the inspection is to be carried out at the premises which are not situated at the same station where the office of the Agency is located.
- (3) On receipt of intimation under sub rule (1), the Agency shall carry out the inspection of honey meant for export by drawing samples for inspection and testing. The Agency, on satisfying itself that the consignment of honey conforms to the standard specifications recognised for the purpose on the basis of inspection and testing carried out as laid down by the Council, shall, within two days or five days, as the case may be, issue certificate declaring the consignment of honey as exportworthy:

Provided that where the Agency is not satisfied, it shall refuse to issue a certificate to the exporter and shall communicate such refusal within two days if the inspection is carried out at the station where the Agency is situated or five

days, if the premises are not situated in the same station where the Agency is located, as the case may be, to the exporter along with the reasons thereof.

(4) Subsequent to certification, the Agency shall have the right to re-assess the quality of the consignment at any place or storage, in transit or at the posts before its actual shipment.

(5) In the event of the consignment being found not conforming to the standard specifications at any of these stages, the certificate of inspection originally issued shall be withdrawn.

(5) Packing and Marking. An exporter intending to pack honey for export after preparing the consignment as per the rules shall pack in hygienically clean wide mouth, glass containers or in acids resistant lacquered tin containers. The screw caps for the glass container shall be non-corrosive and non-reactive material to honey and shall be provided with washers to avoid spilling.

Each container shall be legibly and indelibly marked with the following information, namely:-

1. Name and address of processor or manufacturer.
2. Name and address of the exporter.
3. Name of the material and grade designation.
4. Batch or Lot number.
5. Year, month and date of processing or manufacturing.
6. Gross mass and net mass.
7. Product of India.
8. Shipping mark.

(6) Inspection Fee:-

In case of approval and monitoring system, inspection fee @ 0.20% of the free on board (F.O.B) value with a maximum of Rs. 15 Lakhs per annum per exporter or processor and in case of consignment wise inspection @ 0.40% of freight on board (F.O.B) value subject to a minimum of Rs. 500 per consignment shall be paid by the exporter or processor to the Agency.

Note: The amount of monitoring fee for each consignment payable by the exporter/processor shall be rounded off to the nearest rupee and for this purpose, where such amount contains a part of rupee consisting of paise, then, if such part is fifty paise or more, it shall be increased to one rupee and if each part is less than fifty paise, it shall be ignored.”

(7) Appeal:-

- (a) Any exporter aggrieved by the refusal of the Agency to issue the certificate of inspection may within 10 days of the receipt of the communication of such refusal may prefer an appeal which shall be referred by the Agency to a panel of experts consisting of not less than three, but not more than seven persons appointed for the purposes by the Central Government.
- (b) At least two-thirds of the total membership of the panel shall consist of non-officials.
- (c) The quorum of the panel shall be-
 - (i) two, in case the panel consists of the three members.
 - (ii) three, in case the panel consists of four or more members.
- (d) The appeal shall be disposed of within thirty days of its receipt”

Remarks: This document contains information related to Principle order S.O. 276(E) dated 04th March 2002, subsequently amended vide No. Orders, S.O. 1441(E) dated 19th December, 2003 and Principle Notification S.O. 277 (E) dated 04th March 2002, subsequently amended vide No. Notifications S.O. 1444 dated 19th December 2003, S.O. 1245 dated 14th May 2004, S.O. 1518 dated 16th June, 2008 , S.O. 1581(E) dated 16th July 2012