

# Master BeeKeeper Program

## SCBA Journeyman Class

Honey Labeling/Packaging/Regulations

## Section: 1

# HOW TO LEGALLY SELL YOUR HONEY

- 1. All Honey sold in South Carolina must be properly labeled** (regardless whether exempt from registration/inspection).
- **Your label must comply with the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act** (contact SCDA for requirements and a sample label).
  - Labels **SHOULD** be submitted to SCDA for review prior to printing to ensure compliance with the FPLA (above act).
  - **NET WT.** must be in both OZ and (g) and must be the proper font size (contact SCDA for requirements).
  - Address must be added (City, State, Zip). A street address is required, if business name is not in a local phone book.

## 2. Who will your customers be?

- If you plan to sell your honey to or at roadside markets, convenience stores, health food stores, etc. **you will need to register with the SCDA and have your honey house inspected and approved by SCDA.**
- All of the above constitute **public sale**. Selling to family and friends by word of mouth is not public sale.
- If you sell your honey directly to the end consumer (ie. Farmers markets) and produce no more than 400 gallons (4,800 lbs.) you can apply for registration and inspection exemption. You must file for exemption.
- Note\*Honey sold to the public must be labeled properly, even if you apply for exemption.

### 3. If you do not file/qualify for exemption, where will you produce your honey?

- A home kitchen can **NOT** be used under any circumstances to produce honey for sale to the public.
- You will need to **register with SCDA** and have your honey house approved prior to selling your product to the public.
- You can use a honey house that is already inspected by SCDA, however, you must submit a **Shared Honey House Permission Letter** to SCDA prior to producing any honey.
- Honey house requirements include cleanable walls and floors, approved water source, shatterproof lighting, clean utensils and equipment, sinks, proper drainage, DHEC approved septic system (see Food Processor Guidelines at <http://agriculture.sc.gov/content.aspx?MenuID=98>).
- Honey houses can be on your premises. A converted garage, a “fixed up” shop, etc. can all be used as long as it meets SCDA Guidelines.

## 4. Am I exempt from honey house requirements?

- If you sell your honey directly to the end consumer and produce no more than 400 gallons (4,800 lbs.) you can apply for registration and inspection exemption. You must file for exemption.
- You will still be required to label your product in compliance with the FPLA.

Section: 2

Honey Label

# PURE HONEY

Distributed by or Produced for: (if not the producer)  
New Product Enterprises  
1212 Street Avenue  
Columbia, SC 29555

NET WT 22 OZ (622g)

↔ Conversion Factors: 1 ounce = 28.35 grams

↔ Nutritional Fact Panel is required for firms with 100 + employees and over 100,000 unit sales.

## The Four Basic Label Requirements (Fair Packaging & Labeling Act)

1. Statement of Identity (Product Name) *shall* be in **BOLD** print, type size *must* be comparable to the most prominent printed matter (larger than other type). Must be placed on **Principle Display Panel**.
2. \*\*\*Ingredients not needed if using pure honey.\*\*\*
3. Name and address of the manufacturer, packer, or distributor *shall* be added. Address *shall* include a **street address** (if not in a local directory), **city or town, state, and zip code**. Use the phrases "manufactured by", "manufactured for" (if company is not the original manufacturer), or "distributed by".
4. Net Weight *shall* be placed at **the bottom 1/3** of the **Principle Display Panel**, *shall* be in **both customary (pound, ounce, fluid ounce, etc.)**, and *shall* be in **metric (kilogram, gram, milliliter, etc.)** weights, and have a minimum type size of (see below) based on the area of the principle display panel.

### Minimum type size (inches)

1/16  
(Usually) 1/8  
(Larger jars) 3/16  
1/4

### Area of display panel (sq. inches)

5 sq. inches or less  
5 sq. inches – 25 sq. inches  
25 sq. inches – 100 sq. inches  
100 sq. inches – 400 sq. inches

\*The following is a list of weight measurements and conversions commonly used for honey

8 OZ. (226g)  
12 OZ. (340g)  
16 OZ. (453g)  
18 OZ. (510g)  
22 OZ. (623g)  
32 OZ. (907g)  
44 OZ. (1.24kg)

Links to FPLA can be found at <https://agriculture.sc.gov>



## Section: 3

# Honey Exemption Certificate

(See Exemption Handout)

# Honey Judging and Standards

Judging honey is not like evaluating other commodities. The product itself is not examined so much as the care the exhibitor takes in putting it up for show. Criteria in judging livestock include conformation, weight distribution and behavior. The knowledge to expertly judge livestock is acquired only after a great deal of experience and specialized training.

Not so with honey, a product that is infinitely variable because of differences in floral source. A typical score card for extracted honey lists the following:

1. Container: Appearance (10)
2. Density (20)
  - a) Water content above 18.6% is disqualified
  - b) No upgrading below 16% water content
3. Freedom from crystals (10)
4. Cleanliness and freedom from foam (30)

## 5. Flavor (20)

- a) Downgrade for objectionable flavor or overheating
- b) Disqualify for fermentation

## 6. Accuracy of filling (10)

- a) Headroom: 1/2 inch maximum, inch minimum; no visible gap between honey level and cap
- b) If multiple entries: uniformity of filling

Density is perhaps the most objective measurement of the above criteria. It is measured with a refractometer and numbers can be assigned with accuracy. Most judges do not upgrade for moisture content below 18.6%.

The rest of the judging categories are extremely subjective. In this example, appearance of the container is awarded 10 points. This boils down to suitability and uniformity if multiple entries are provided. Usually, shows request three identical jars for comparison. Freedom from crystals, foam and overall cleanliness are 40% of the score. This can be judged using a bright light. Many judges use polarized light. The amount of foam usually is easily observed by taking off the cap.

Perhaps most controversial is judging honey flavor. The judge cannot let preferences for certain flavors prejudice the case. Only honey that tastes alcoholic (fermented) or burned can be marked down. Finally, accuracy of filling is judged. Some contests may include a category for color/clarity.

Subjectiveness in honey judging, therefore, implies a great deal of evaluating based on common sense. Expert knowhow is not needed, except perhaps in use of the refractometer.

Every contest has distinct rules and the score card should be obtained to see what criteria are being judged. Other classes of honey that might be entered include; comb honey, chunk honey and finely granulated (crystallized, creamed) honey. In addition, artistic or culinary creations and wax candles or blocks are categories found at many fairs or shows. Observation beehives and exhibits or displays advertising honey or honey bees are also judged at many fairs.

# **Domestic Standards**

True United States Standards exist only for extracted honey. In many respects, they mirror those criteria listed above for judging honey. The latest standards were established May 23, 1985. They are classed as voluntary and are issued under the authority of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946. Their purpose is to provide for development of official U.S. grades to designate different levels of quality and facilitate orderly marketing of the product.



# Color Designations of Extracted Honey

## USDA Color Designation

- Water White
- Extra White
- White
- Extra Light Amber
- Light Amber
- Amber
- Dark Amber

## USDA Color Standards

- Water White to Extra White
- Water white or lighter
- Extra White to White
- White to Extra Light Amber
- Extra Light Amber to Light Amber
- Light Amber to Amber
- Darker than amber