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Composition and quality requirements for honey and requirements for the provision of food information¹

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This Regulation is enacted on the basis of Sections 12(4) and 38(4) of the Food Act.

Chapter 1 General provisions

§ 1. Scope

(1) This Regulation lays down composition and quality requirements for honey and requirements for the provision of food information.

(2) For the purposes of this Regulation, honey is the natural sweet substance produced by *Apis mellifer* bees from the nectar of plants and from the secretions of living parts of plants or of insects feeding on those parts, which the bees collect, transform by combining with specific substances particular to them, deposit in honeycomb cells, dehydrate and store in those cells and finally leave there to ripen and mature.

(3) Pollen, being a natural constituent particular to honey, shall not be considered to be an ingredient — within the meaning of Article 2(2)(f) of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the provision of food information to consumers, amending Regulations (EC) No 1924/2006 and (EC) No 1925/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Commission Directive 87/250/EEC, Council Directive 90/496/EEC, Commission Directive 1999/10/EC, Directive 2000/13/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, Commission Directives 2002/67/EC and 2008/5/EC and Commission Regulation (EC) No 608/2004 (OJ L 304, 22.11.2011, pp. 18–63) — of the types of honey defined in Section 2.

Chapter 2 Composition and quality requirements for honey

§ 2. Composition and quality requirements for honey

(1) Honey is classified according to botanical origin as follows:

- 1) blossom honey or nectar honey — honey obtained from the nectar of plants;
- 2) honeydew honey — honey obtained mainly from the secretions of living parts of plants and of insects (*Hemiptera*) feeding on those parts.

(2) Honey is classified according to mode of processing and packaging for sale as follows:

- 1) comb honey — honey stored by bees in the cells of freshly built broodless combs or thin comb foundation sheets made solely of beeswax and sold in sealed whole combs or sections of such combs;
- 2) chunk honey or cut comb in honey — honey which contains one or more pieces of comb honey;
- 3) drained honey — honey obtained by draining decapped broodless combs;
- 4) extracted honey — honey obtained by centrifuging decapped broodless combs;
- 5) pressed honey — honey obtained by pressing broodless combs with or without the application of moderate heat not exceeding 45 °C;
- 6) filtered honey — honey obtained by removing foreign inorganic or organic matter in such a way as to result in the significant removal of pollen.

(3) Honey consists essentially of sugars, predominantly fructose and glucose, and of other substances such as organic acids, enzymes and solid particles derived from honey collection. The colour of honey varies from nearly colourless to dark brown. The consistency can be fluid, viscous or partly to entirely crystallised. The flavour and aroma may vary, but are derived from the plant origin.

(4) Honey placed on the market as honey or used in food must meet the following requirements:

- 1) honey shall not have any additions other than honey;
- 2) honey must, as far as possible, be free from organic or inorganic matter foreign to its composition;
- 3) honey must not have any foreign tastes or odours, signs of fermentation or artificially changed acidity or have been heated in such a way that the natural enzymes have been either destroyed or significantly inactivated.

(5) Baker's honey for industrial use or use as an ingredient in other foodstuffs which are then processed may have been overheated, have signs of fermentation or have fermented and have a foreign taste or odour. The requirement laid down in indent 3 of subsection 4 shall not apply to baker's honey.

(6) With the exception of filtered honey, no pollen or constituent particular to honey shall be removed from it except where this is unavoidable in the removal of foreign inorganic or organic matter.

(7) Honey placed on the market as honey or used in food must comply with the following physico-chemical specifications:

- 1) fructose and glucose content in blossom honey not less than 60 g/100 g; in honey dew honey and blends of honeydew honey with blossom honey not less than 45 g/100 g;
- 2) sucrose content not more than 5 g/100 g; in honey obtained from false acacia (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*), Menzies Banksia (*Banksia menziesii*), French honeysuckle (*Hedysarum*), red gum (*Eucalyptus camadulensis*), leatherwood (*Eucryphia lucida*), dwarf leatherwood (*Eucryphia milliganii*) or citrus (*Citrus*spp.) not more than 10 g/100 g; in honey obtained from lavender (*Lavandula*spp.) or borage (*Borago officinalis*) not more than 15 g/100 g;
- 3) moisture content not more than 20 %; in heather (*Calluna*) and baker's honey not more than 23 %; in baker's honey from heather not more than 25 %;
- 4) water-insoluble content not more than 0.1 g/100 g; in pressed honey not more than 0.5 g/100 g;
- 5) electrical conductivity not more than 0.8 millisiemens per centimetre; in honeydew and chestnut honey and blends of these not less than 0.8 mS/cm, except for honey obtained from the strawberry tree (*Arbutus unedo*), bell heather (*Erica*), eucalyptus, lime (*Tilia*spp.), ling heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), manuka or jelly bush (*Leptospermum*) or the tea tree (*Melaleuca*spp.);
- 6) free acid content not more than 50 milli-equivalents per 1 000 grams; in baker's honey not more than 80 milli-equivalents per 1 000 grams;
- 7) diastase activity after processing and blending (Schade scale) not less than 8, except baker's honey; diastase activity in honeys with low natural enzyme content (e.g. citrus honeys) and a hydroxymethylfurfural (HMF) content of not more than 15 mg/kg, not less than 3;
- 8) hydroxymethylfurfural content after processing and blending not more than 40 mg/kg, except for baker's honey and having regard to the HMF content referred to in 7 above; in honeys from regions with a tropical climate and blends of these honeys not more than 80 mg/kg.

Chapter 3

Requirements for the provision of food information concerning honey

§ 3. Requirements for the provision of food information concerning honey

(1) Where food information is provided concerning honey, the requirements of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council and the requirements laid down in this Section shall be observed.

(2) The term 'honey' shall be used only for products conforming to the definition set out in Section 1(2).

(3) The names set out in Section 2(1), (2) and (5) shall be used only for products meeting the composition and quality requirements laid down in those provisions. These names may be replaced by the term 'honey', except in the case of filtered honey, comb honey, baker's honey and chunk honey or cut comb in honey.

(4) In the case of baker's honey the words 'intended for cooking only' shall be shown in close proximity to the product name.

(5) Except in the case of filtered honey and baker's honey, the product name may be supplemented by information referring to:

- 1) floral or vegetable origin, if the product comes wholly or mainly from the indicated blossom or plants and possesses the corresponding organoleptic, physico-chemical and microscopic characteristics;
- 2) regional, territorial or topographical origin, if the product comes solely from the place indicated;
- 3) specific quality characteristics.

(6) Where baker's honey has been used as an ingredient in a foodstuff, the term 'honey' may be used in the name of the foodstuff instead of the term 'baker's honey', provided that the term 'baker's honey' is used in the list of ingredients.

(7) The country or countries of origin where the honey has been harvested shall be indicated on the label. If the honey originates in more than one Member State of the European Union or in a country outside the customs territory of the European Union, the name of the country of origin may be replaced with one of the following:

- 1) 'blend of EU honeys';
- 2) 'blend of non-EU honeys';
- 3) 'blend of EU and non-EU honeys'.

(8) In the case of filtered honey and baker's honey, the containers, packs and accompanying documents shall indicate the name laid down in Section 2(2)6) or Section 2(5).

Chapter 4

Implementing provisions

§ 4. Implementation

(1) Until 24 June 2015, the country or countries of origin where the honey has been harvested shall be indicated on the label, and if the honey originates in more than one Member State of the European Union or in a country outside the customs territory of the European Union, the name of the country of origin may be replaced with one of the following:

- 1) 'blend of EC honeys';
- 2) 'blend of non-EC honeys';
- 3) 'blend of EC and non-EC honeys'.

(2) Honey that is placed on the market or labelled before 24 June 2015 and in accordance with the requirements that apply before that date may be marketed until stocks are exhausted.

§ 5. Entry into force of this Regulation

(1) This Regulation shall enter into force on 13 December 2014.

(2) Sections 1(3) and 3(7) of this Regulation shall enter into force on 24 June 2015.

¹Council Directive 2001/110/EC relating to honey (OJ L 010, 12.1.2002, p. 47); amended by Directive 2014/63/EU (OJ L 164, 3.6.2014, pp. 1–5).

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