

L.N. 78 of 1999

**QUALITY CONTROL (EXPORTS, IMPORTS AND LOCAL
GOODS) ACT
(CAP. 225)**

**Honey Order, 1999
(Order No. M 40 of 1999)**

IN exercise of the powers conferred by section 3 of the Quality Control (Exports, Imports and Local Goods) Act, the Malta Standardisation Authority has made the following Order:—

Citation and
commencement.

1.1 This Order may be cited as the Honey Order, 1999, and may be referred to as Order No. M 40 of 1999.

1.2 This Order shall become operative on the 1st July 1999, which date shall be notified by the Authority in the Gazette.

Interpretation.

2.1 For the purposes of this Mandatory Order, “honey” shall mean the foodstuff which is produced by the honey-bee from the nectar of blossoms or secretions of or on living parts of plants, and which the bees collect, transform, combine with specific substances of their own and store or leave to mature in honey combs. This foodstuff may be fluid, viscous or crystallised.

2.2 The main types of honey are as follows:

2.2.1 according to origin

blossom honey:

honey obtained predominantly from the nectar of blossoms;

honeydew honey:

honey obtained predominantly from secretions of or on living parts of plants; its colour varies from light or greenish brown to almost black;

2.2.2 according to mode of presentation

comb honey:

honey stored by bees in the cells of freshly built broodless combs and sold in sealed whole combs or sections of such combs;

chunk honey:

honey which contains one or more pieces of comb honey;

drained honey:

honey obtained by draining decapped broodless combs;

extracted honey:

honey obtained by centrifuging decapped broodless combs;

pressed honey:

honey obtained by pressing broodless combs with or without the application of moderate heat;

baker's honey or industrial honey

honey which, although suitable for human consumption, has a foreign taste or odour, has begun to ferment, is effervescent, or has been heated, and has a diastase activity or hydroxymethylfurfural content which does not comply with the specifications laid down in the Schedule.

3.1 This Mandatory Order shall not apply to products intended exclusively for export. Applicability.

3.2 A name prescribed or reserved by this Mandatory Order may not be used in the labelling or advertising of any food as the name of the food, whether or not it is qualified by other words, unless the food is the food for which the name is prescribed or reserved.

3.3 A name prescribed or reserved by this Mandatory Order may not be used in the labelling or advertising of any food, whether or not qualified by other words, so as to suggest either expressly or by implication that the named food is used as an ingredient unless the food in whose labelling or advertising the name is used contains as an ingredient the food for which the name is prescribed or reserved.

3.4 No person may sell or advertise for sale any food for which the labelling contravenes regulations 3.2 or 3.3.

Marketing of honey.

4.1 No person may sell, offer for sale or distribute honey if it does not conform to the definitions and rules laid down in this Mandatory Order and the annexed Schedule.

4.2 The term “honey” shall be applied only to the product defined in paragraph 2.1 and must be used in trade to designate that product, without prejudice to any other provisions.

4.3 The names referred to in paragraph 2.2 shall be applied only to the products defined therein.

4.4 No product other than honey may be added to honey offered for sale as such.

4.5 When it is marketed the honey shall comply with the compositional criteria listed in the Schedule, provided that these compositional criteria shall not apply to any part of comb honey or chunk honey which consists of any comb or any constituent part thereof.

4.6 In addition:

4.6.1 honey shall, as far as practicable, be free from organic or inorganic matters foreign to its composition, such as mould, insects, insect debris, brood or grains of sand, when the honey is marketed as such or is used in any product for human consumption;

4.6.2 honey shall not:

- (i) have any foreign tastes or odours;
- (ii) have begun to ferment or effervesce;
- (iii) have been heated to such an extent that its natural enzymes are destroyed or made inactive;
- (iv) have an artificially changed acidity;

4.6.3 honey may under no circumstances contain substances in such quantity as to endanger human health.

4.7 Honey may be marketed as “baker’s honey” or “industrial honey” if, although suitable for human consumption:

- it does not comply with the requirements referred to in paragraph 4.6.2 (i), (ii), (iii), or

■ its diastase activity or hydroxymethylfurfural content do not comply with the specifications laid down in the Schedule.

5.1 The following information, in one of the official languages of Malta or in Italian, must be displayed in a conspicuous, clearly legible and indelible manner on packages, containers or labels of honey:

Labelling and presentation of honey.

5.1.1 the term “honey” (*għasel* in Maltese, *miele* in Italian) or one of the names listed in paragraph 2.2; “comb honey” and “chunk honey” must, however be described as such; in the cases referred to in paragraph 4.7, the name of the product shall be “baker’s honey” or “industrial honey”;

5.1.2 the name or trade name and the address or registered office of the producer or packer or of an importer established in Malta;

5.1.3 the net weight in grams.

5.2 The term “honey” as referred to in paragraph 5.1.1 or one of the names referred to in paragraph 2.2 may be supplemented *inter alia* by:

5.2.1 a reference to the origin, whether blossom or plant, provided the product comes predominantly from the source indicated and has the appropriate organoleptic, physico-chemical and microscopic characteristics;

5.2.2 a regional, territorial or topographical name, provided the product originates entirely in the area indicated. In particular, the term “Maltese honey” (*għasel ta’ Malta*) shall be reserved for honey originating and produced in its entirety in Malta.

5.3 Where honey is put up for sale or distribution in packages or containers of a net weight equal to or exceeding 10 kilograms and is not retailed, the information referred to in paragraphs 5.1.2 and 5.1.3 may, if desired, appear only on the accompanying documents.

5.4 If honey is packaged in more than one container, the label containing the required information must either be marked on, or securely attached to, the outermost container, or it must be readily discernible and easily read through or notwithstanding the outer container.

SCHEDULE

Compositional Criteria for Honey

1. **Apparent reducing sugar content, calculated as invert sugar**
 - blossom honey not less than 65%
 - honeydew honey and blends of honeydew honey and blossom honey not less than 60%
2. **Moisture content**
 - in general not more than 21%
 - heather honey (*Calluna*) and clover honey (*Trifolium sp.*) not more than 23%
3. **Apparent sucrose content**
 - in general not more than 5%
 - honeydew honey, and blends of honeydew honey and blossom honey, acacia, lavender and *banksia menziesii* honeys not more than 10%
4. **Water-insoluble solids content**
 - in general not more than 0.1%
 - Pressed honey not more than 0.5%
5. **Mineral content (ash)**
 - In general not more than 0.6%
 - honeydew honey, and blends of honeydew honey and blossom honey not more than 1%
6. **Acidity** not more than 40 milliequivalents acid per 1000 grams.
7. **Diastase activity and hydroxymethylfurfural (HMF) determined after processing and blending**
 - a) *diastase activity (Schade scale)*
 - in general not less than 8
 - honeys with low natural enzyme content (e.g. citrus) and a HMF content not more than 15 mg/kg not less than 3
 - b) HMF not more than 40 mg/kg (subject to the provisions of paragraph (a) second indent).