National Honey Packers & Dealers Association
3301 Route 66 • Suite 205, Bldg. C • Neptune, NJ 07753
732-922-3008 • Fax 732-922-3590
www.afius.org • info@nhpda.org

# NHPDA Adulteration Testing Best Practices

The National Honey Packers and Dealer's Association (NHPDA) represents 32 packers and importers. Our membership includes most major US honey companies. Our members have been leading the US honey industry since the NHPDA's inception in the early 1970s.

Honey is a 100% natural sweetener produced by honeybees with no additives, preservatives or economic adulterants. Unfortunately, honey is consistently identified as one of the most adulterated foods in the world. The NHPDA is committed to ensuring honey authenticity to preserve and protect the image of honey with the American consumer.

To promote honey authenticity and to detect food fraud, several honey testing methods are offered by accredited laboratories. To date, there is no single universal analytical method available capable of detecting all types of honey adulteration with adequate sensitivity. Historically employed by the honey industry and the Food Drug Administration (FDA) is the SCIRA test, which is the only official AOAC method (998.12). This test effectively tests for added C4 sugar syrups obtained from corn and cane sugar but does not detect C3 sugar syrups – such as beet, rice, wheat and other plants. The FDA has recognized this point in discussions with the NHPDA and is working to develop and validate advanced C3 adulteration testing methods.

To ensure that honey consumed in the US is not adulterated with C3 or C4 sugars and syrups, and to promote voluntary compliance of widely adopted advanced testing methods that the FDA is currently evaluating, the NHPDA has announced its own honey adulteration best practices. For years, NHPDA members have individually used these adulteration tests on millions of pounds of honey to ensure that consumers receive a pure product. Our recommendation is based on this experience, with input from leading honey-testing laboratories and in working with regulators.

The NHPDA's adulteration testing recommendation for domestic and imported honey includes at a minimum the following tests, performed at a third-party accredited laboratory with accredited testing methods:

1. EA/LC-IRMS (C3 and C4 sugar / syrups)
2. LC-HRMS

These advanced tests use different analytical methods to detect adulteration. No single test can detect the various forms of sophisticated adulterants. If these tests are inconclusive or you would like to do additional testing, we recommend also doing an NMR test. NMR is not as sensitive as EA/LC-IRMS and HRMS but provides a broad-based screening methodology that can detect new adulterants that other tests may not be able to identify.

Please contact your honey supplier, the NHPDA, an accredited laboratory or the FDA to receive additional information and support so that you can confirm that the honey you receive is tested using the most advanced methods available to the industry.

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