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Regulations relating to the grading and marking of honey and mixtures of bee products intended for sale in the Republic of South Africa



agriculture, land reform
& rural development

Department:
Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

BACKGROUND

Like in many other countries, the Republic of South Africa has requirements for the control of the sale of honey or mixtures of bee products. This is administered under Agricultural Product Standards Act, 1990 (Act No. 119 of 1990), Regulation No. R. 835 of 25 August 2000. The regulations apply to grading, packaging and marking of honey and mixtures of bee products intended for sale in the Republic of South Africa. South African regulatory requirements on honey and mixtures of bee products are designed to protect consumers, while ensuring fair competition for the industry, including both local and imported products.

REQUIREMENTS FOR SALE

Honey and mixtures of bee products intended for sale in the Republic must comply with the following:

- Grade requirements
- Standards for grades
- Container requirements
- Marking requirements
- Restricted particulars
- Should be free from impurities, additives and adulterants.

GRADES OF HONEY AND MIXTURES OF BEE PRODUCTS

Honey is graded into two grades, which are

- Choice grade
- Industrial grade.

STANDARDS FOR GRADES FOR HONEY

- Honey shall be well ripened in order to have the correct moisture content and enzyme activity
- Be free of foreign particles in its composition (free from mould, insects or of debris, sand)
- Honey shall not have foreign tastes or odours
- Honey shall not have started to ferment or effervesce
- Honey shall not have been treated in such a way that destroys its natural enzymes or renders these inactive.

REQUIREMENTS FOR CONTAINERS

Containers of honey or mixtures of bee products shall be:

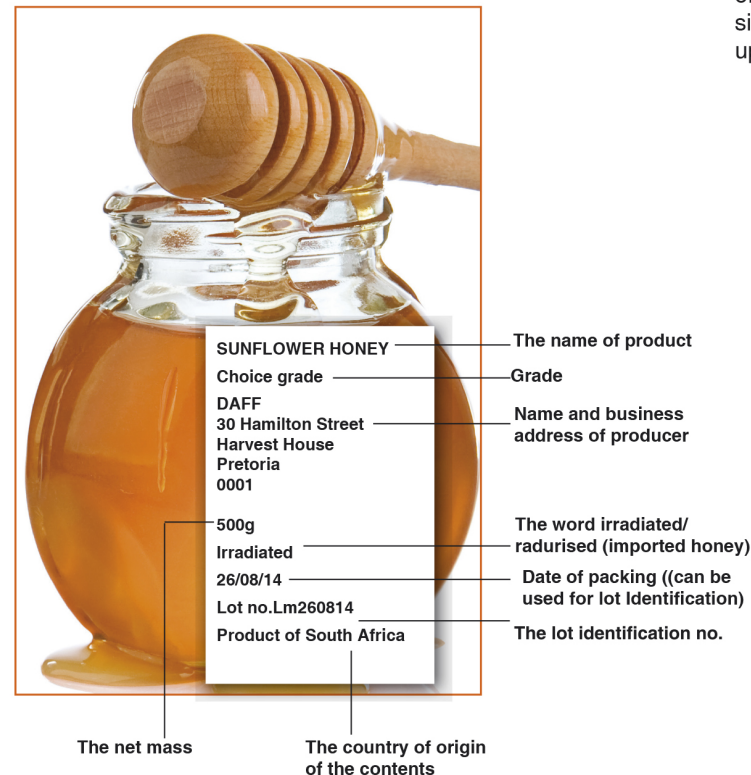
- made from materials that:

- are suitable for this purpose
- will protect the content from contamination
- will not contaminate the content in anyway
- strong in such a way that it will not be damaged or deformed during normal storage, handling and transport practices
- intact and be closed/sealed properly.

MARKING REQUIREMENTS

According to the legislation mentioned above, any container with honey or mixtures of bee products intended for sale locally shall be clearly and legibly marked. The prescribed marking requirements are set with the aim of providing the consumer with accurate and relevant information on a product, so as to allow an informed and personal choice to be made. The sketch below provides an example of how the container shall be marked.

Note: Minimum letter sizes apply



Please note that honey may be subjected to laboratory tests to determine the composition, quality and ripeness thereof. If the honey does not comply with any one of the selected tests, then it shall be regarded as not complying with the standards for grades of honey.

RESTRICTED PARTICULARS ON CONTAINERS

1. No wording, illustration or other means of expression which constitute a misrepresentation or may create a misleading impression of the content shall appear on any container with honey or mixtures of bee products.
2. The word "honey" or any representation thereof may not appear anywhere on any honey substitute, its label or packaging, unless such honey substitute contains any honey, then the word "honey" shall only appear within the list of ingredients of such honey substitute.

LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

It is expected for all honey producers or packers to comply with the requirements as mentioned in the regulation with regard to the grading, packing and marking of honey and mixtures of bee products intended for sale in the Republic of South Africa. Anyone who fails to comply with the provisions of the regulation shall be guilty of an offence and upon conviction will be liable to a fine or imprisonment.