



Photos: Dr Matt Buys, Scion

## Want to find out more?

If you have any questions or would like more information about the MPI Mānuka Honey Science Programme, please contact us at

[manuka.honey@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:manuka.honey@mpi.govt.nz)

# MPI Mānuka Honey Science Programme

## December 2016 update

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) is leading work to develop a rigorous, independent and transparent scientific definition of mānuka honey. A robust definition for New Zealand mānuka honey (honey from *Leptospermum scoparium*) will help protect consumers and producers from fraud, provide markets with assurances and protect our reputation as a supplier of safe and authentic food.

This three-year programme of work is nearing completion. Outlined below is our planned timeframe for sharing information with stakeholders and seeking feedback over coming months:

- » Summary science report, including the analysis to determine a definition of mānuka honey, published in late January 2017.
- » Public consultation on proposals to implement the mānuka honey definition and other measures to support honey authenticity through a General Requirement for Export (GREX), February–March 2017.
- » The GREX will be finalised as soon as possible following consultation in April 2017.
- » We anticipate that there will be transition period of 3 months before the GREX requirements come into force.

### Our work to date

MPI's mānuka honey science programme has been comprehensive. Our science over the last three years has involved:

- » Contracts with experts in New Zealand, Australia and UK covering sampling design, field collection, plant identification, chemical and DNA test development and validation and statistical analyses.
- » Establishment of MPI reference collection for plant and honey samples from across New Zealand from two flowering seasons. Plus an additional collection of archive and foreign honey samples. Plant (over 700) and honey (over 800) samples collected represent mānuka, kānuka, other plants related to mānuka and those involved in honey production.



- » Identification of attributes (chemical and DNA) that are found in the mānuka plant and can be followed through to the honey. The attributes are either not found in other species or are at very different concentrations in mānuka honey.
- » Validation of test methods to detect attributes of interest.
- » Statistical analyses to determine suitability of the attributes and what the concentrations of the chemicals and DNA are in monofloral or multifloral mānuka honey.

### Summary of results of MPI Science Programme

The science analysis to determine the definition is due to be finished by MPI in late December 2016.

The definition will include a number of attributes, both chemicals and DNA (based on pollen), that can identify honey as monofloral mānuka or multifloral mānuka.

A report summarising MPI's science, including the methods used and analyses completed and the results from this work, will be produced and available in January 2017. We will notify stakeholders once this information is published on the MPI website.

### Additional scientific reports or information

MPI's science programme has considered information and data provided by the industry over the past three years. We welcome any additional published or unpublished scientific reports that will add to our knowledge base. Please provide such reports to [manuka.honey@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:manuka.honey@mpi.govt.nz)

### Implementation of the definition

MPI is developing a General Requirement for Exporters (GREX), Section 60 notice under the Animal Products Act 1999 to implement the definition for exported mānuka honey. The proposed GREX will also include general testing requirements for all honey (e.g. relating to tutin levels, sugar, HMF) and proposed measures to improve traceability of honey from the hive to processor.

MPI will release a discussion document in February 2017 for stakeholders to provide feedback on the proposed GREX. This will also be accompanied by some stakeholder meetings. We are still working through the timing and details for these, and will provide you with further information when it is available.

We will also continue to work on policy advice about longer term regulatory and non-regulatory options for the definition of mānuka honey, for example, about how requirements relating to the definition should be applied to honey not covered by the GREX, including domestic honey.

