

Mānuka honey sold in New Zealand: is further regulation needed?

To respond to concerns raised in some export markets, the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) developed a robust and sophisticated scientific definition that can be used to authenticate whether or not a particular honey is New Zealand mānuka honey. Since 5 February 2018, all exported mānuka honey is required to meet the mānuka honey science definition.

MPI is now consulting on whether the same science used for exported mānuka honey should be applied to mānuka honey sold in New Zealand. The proposals for the standard would mainly impact businesses in the honey industry that are packaging mānuka honey for retail sale, or selling honey in bulk to third parties using mānuka honey as an ingredient in other products.

Key questions being considered in the consultation are:

- Should the mānuka honey science definition, which can be used to authenticate New Zealand mānuka honey, be applied to mānuka honey sold in New Zealand?
- If the mānuka honey science definition is applied to the domestic mānuka honey market, should it be voluntary or mandatory for mānuka honey to meet the standard?
- If there is a science definition standard, how should it work?

We are seeking views from anyone with an interest in mānuka honey that is sold and purchased in New Zealand, including consumers and producers of mānuka honey. It is important for MPI to understand the possible benefits, costs and impacts, and to think about how this might work in practice.

What would a voluntary standard involve?

- Not all New Zealand mānuka honey sold in New Zealand would need to meet the standard.
- Businesses could choose whether they participate in the standard or not.
- Participating businesses would agree to follow the rules and requirements of the standard.

What would a mandatory standard involve?

- All New Zealand mānuka honey sold in New Zealand would need to meet the standard.
- All businesses would need to follow the rules and requirements of the standard.

What are the proposals for the standard?	
What products would a standard apply to?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-ingredient mānuka honey for sale as a product for human consumption – for example the mānuka honey you can buy at the supermarket. • This would include mānuka honey in retail packs, and mānuka honey being sold to be subsequently used in another product. • The proposals would not apply to mānuka honey in storage until it was ready for packaging or sale to a third party using it as an ingredient in another product.
Who would a standard apply to?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses that package mānuka honey for retail sale or sell mānuka honey in bulk to third parties intending to use it as an ingredient in another product. • These businesses would be responsible for making sure that the mānuka honey met the requirements of the standard.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beekeepers and other honey industry businesses that do not package mānuka honey for sale, do not sell mānuka honey directly to consumers or do not sell mānuka honey to third parties intending to use it as an ingredient, would not need to follow the standard.
Labelling requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For a voluntary standard, only businesses participating in the standard and meeting the requirements could claim that they are meeting the standard. Non-participating businesses could still label their honey as mānuka honey. For a mandatory standard, only honey that meets the standard could be labelled as mānuka honey.
Testing requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For honey to meet the standard, it must be tested to show it meets the science definition by a MPI recognised laboratory. Businesses the standard applies to are responsible for taking samples and interpreting test results correctly.
Record keeping and administrative requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Businesses the standard applies to would be responsible for keeping records of sampling and test results, and providing records within 24 hours if a request is made. Businesses the standard applies to would be responsible for collecting sufficient information to trace the sampling and test results to each batch, and trace the products from the batch back to the sampling and test records.
Verification requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laboratory test results and sampling records are required to be verified.
Enforcement requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For a voluntary standard, enforcement would take place through contractual arrangements. For a mandatory standard, enforcement would take place through existing provisions in food legislation, with the addition of a proposed infringement fee.
Transitional provisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mānuka honey already packaged for sale when the regulations came in to effect can still be sold. Mānuka honey that has met the science definition can still be sold. There would be at least six months from any regulations being made for provisions to take effect.

How to find out more and make a submission:

Visit our website to make a submission and find out about public meetings

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/news-and-resources/consultations/manuka-honey-sold-in-new-zealand-is-further-regulation-needed>

Email us at:

Manuka.Honey@mpi.govt.nz

Write to us at:

Food and Regulatory Policy
Ministry for Primary Industries
PO Box 2526, Wellington 6104

Consultation closes at 5 pm on Monday 17 September 2018

Submissions are public information