

Canadian Honey Council (CHC) Statement on Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) Honey Fraud Report – 2023

March 2023

The Canadian Honey Council would like to highlight the effort being made by Canadian Food Inspection Agency in regards to keeping adulterated honey off of the store shelves in Canada. The latest results of a multi-year, targeted inspection program by CFIA has shown that 17 of 74 samples (22.9%) of imported honey collected were determined to not be authentic honey. Due to the targeted sampling of honey considered to be at high risk of adulteration, the 22.9% adulteration rate is not necessarily representative of the current state of imported honey. However, the 2021-2022 Food Fraud Report resulted in a total of 184,921 kilograms of honey that was detained, denied entry into Canada, or destroyed.

Adulterated honey is produced by mixing authentic honey with other syrups such as rice syrup, fructose syrup, sucrose syrup, or scientifically modified syrups for the purposes of economic gain. This can result in additional ingredients in the honey that are not listed. This process cheats the consumer into paying for a product they view as authentic and high quality, but they are actually paying for a cheap sugar syrup, or syrup-honey blend. Adulterated honey undermines the credibility of authentic, Canadian honey that is produced with pride by over 10,000 beekeepers across Canada.

Food fraud is becoming an increasing problem, with honey commonly noted to be one of the top three foods that is adulterated in the world. In fact, honey had the second-highest failure rate of all commodities tested in the 2021-2022 Food Fraud Annual Report, and this report detained, removed, or destroyed a whopping 220% more adulterated honey than was found in the 2019-2020 Food Fraud Report. This emphasizes the critical need to maintain or increase this surveillance.

Clearly, efforts are being made by some importers or dishonest suppliers of imported honey to circumvent the high standards expected by Canadian consumers. The Canadian beekeeping industry is fiercely proud to produce pure, natural honey under some of the strictest honey regulations in the world. Canadian Honey Council fully supports the work of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Canada Border Services Agency and looks forward to continuing these increasingly important inspections, keeping the food supply of Canada safe.