



Quality Guidance for Fairtrade Honey

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Quality aspects for Fairtrade honey are determined by producers and traders. This document provides some guidance on Fairtrade honey quality and pricing levels.

Fairtrade certified honey should:

- not have any objectionable flavour, aroma or taint absorbed from foreign matter during the processing and storage;
- not have begun to ferment or be effervescent;
- be free of any residues caused by medical application against bee illness (e.g. varroasis, foulbrood, etc.);
- not contain any foreign sugar; and
- be free of foreign matters such as mould, insects, insect debris, sand, etc.

Eventual feeding of sugar should be limited strictly to the non-productive season and in addition should be kept at the absolute minimum necessary.

Definition of the quality standards for honey

Honey traded under Fairtrade conditions is classified into two categories, according to its quality. Two criteria are relevant for determining the quality; the water content and Hydroxymethylfulfural (HMF) content. For each category, points can be given according to the following tables:

Table 1: Assessing the water content in honey

Water content (% Chataway)	Points	Factor	Max. points
16.9 % or less	5	4	20
17.0 – 17.5	4	4	16
17.6 – 18.5 %	3	4	12
18.6 – 19.0 %	2	4	8
19.1 – 19.5 %	0.5	4	2
19.6 % or more	0	4	0



Table 2: Assessing the HMF content in honey

HMF content (ppm)	Points	Factor	Max. points
5.0 or less	5	3	15
5.1 – 9.9	4	3	12
10.0 – 12.0	3	3	9
12.1 – 15.0	2	3	6
15.1 – 20.0	1	3	3
20 and over	0	3	0

The quality of the honey can be determined by adding together the points given for the two quality criteria above. On this basis, two quality categories can be defined:

A quality: Any honey that achieves 18 points or more.

B quality: Any honey that achieves 17 points or less.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this document, please contact:
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