

Information fiche: HONEY – IMPORTS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES INTO THE EU
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The core requirement for importing honey into the EU is for the country in question to have a **residue monitoring plan**, approved by the EU. This plan is intended to assess the ability of the official services of the exporting country to ensure the safety of the honey with regard to residues of chemical substances in it.

- **Why?**

Due to concerns about food safety, residue monitoring plans are required from third countries for imports into the EU of all animals and products of animal origin. *This is laid down in Council Directive 96/23/EC of 29 April 1996 on measures to monitor certain substances and residues thereof in live animals and animal products (OJ L 125, 23/5/1996).* Honey is considered as an animal product.

The control of residues in honey is important to control the traces of any contamination that the bees have picked up. Three main groups of products are targeted for examination:

- Banned veterinary substances (such as chloramphenicol)
- Authorised veterinary substances (but found in excess of their authorised limits, such as antibiotics and insecticides)
- Environmental pollutants (such as pesticides or heavy metals)

- **What needs to be in a residue plan?**

This information is summarised in the attachment and the original legislation should be referred to.

The residue monitoring plan is based on an annual significant sampling of the product, analysed for banned products, veterinary substances beyond their authorised limits or for chemical or pesticide contaminants. Third countries should submit their monitoring plan to the EU annually, before the 31st March.

The plan is based on targeted sampling, established in the light of the analysed results of the preceding year. This means that the plan cannot be correctly evaluated unless it is presented in parallel with the results of the previous year's results.

The first time a third country presents its residue monitoring plan, it is necessary to present the general context in which the plan is situated. This includes:

- The legal framework for the residue monitoring plan;
- The structure of the official services in charge of the controls;
- The laboratories undertaking the official analysis and their qualifications;
- The official sampling procedure
- The measures taken in case of non-respect of the legislation.

This general information does not have to be re-submitted annually, unless if it needs updating.

- **What next?**

The responsible authority should forward its residue plan to the European Commission for approval. The address for correspondence is –

*European Commission
DG Health and Consumer Protection
Chemical and physical risks, surveillance
1049 – Brussels
Belgium*

The Commission services will examine the plan and if it meets their approval, an appropriate legislative decision will be sent to the relevant Standing committee for approval. If the plan needs some development, this would be discussed with the country in question.

Countries whose residue plans are approved are listed in the amendments of Commission Decision 2004/432/EC on the approval of residue plans of third countries according to Council Directive 96/23/EC.

- Annexes:**
1. Summary of requirements for residue monitoring plan
 2. Council Directive 96/23/EC of 29 April 1996 on measures to monitor certain substances and residues thereof in live animals and animal products
 3. Commission Decision 97/747/EC of 27 October 1997 fixing the levels and frequencies of sampling provided for by Council Directive 96/23/EC for the monitoring of certain substances and residues thereof in certain animal products
 4. Last amendment of Commission Decision 2004/432/EC of 29 April 2004 on the provisional approval of residue plans of third countries according to Council Directive 96/23/EC (Last amendment = Decision 2005/233/EC)

**SUMMARY OF INFORMATION TO BE SUBMITTED CONCERNING
A RESIDUE MONITORING PLAN FOR HONEY**
1. GENERAL INFORMATION

- 1.1. Legislation** concerning the use of substances of Annex I (Directive 96/23/EC - Article 7§1).
- 1.2. Infrastructure of the official services;** information on co-ordination of the activities of central and regional departments (Directive 96/23/EC - Article 7§2 and article 4).
- 1.3. List of Official Laboratories** (Directive 96/23/EC - Article 7§3).
- 1.4. Level of competence of the National Reference Laboratorie(s)**, as well as routine Laboratories, particularly as regards the implementation of Quality Assurance, or good laboratory practices.
- 1.5. National tolerance limits (MRLs)** for authorised substances and environmental contaminants (Directive 96/23/EC - Article 7§4).
- 1.6. Official sampling procedures** in the field, including information on how samples are secured after collection (using flow charts).
- 1.7. Description of measures taken by the competent authorities** where residues are detected (Directive 96/23/EC - Article 7§7-8)

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON PRODUCTION

- 2.1. Total figures of production.**
- 2.2. Type of production** of 2.1. (intensive, extensive, wild or mixed systems)
- 2.3. Production planned to be exported to the EU.** (Decision 97/747/EC).

3. SCOPE OF THE RESIDUE PLAN

- 3.1. Groups of residues covered** (as listed in Directive 96/23/EC - Annex I); Breakdown of substances monitored (Directive 96/23/EC - Article 7§5).
→ Cf. Table
- 3.2. Details of analysis methods** - screening/routine and confirmation, with action levels and detection limits (Directive 96/23/EC - Article 7§5).
→ Cf. Table

4. FREQUENCIES AND LEVELS OF THE CONTROLS

- 4.1. Number of samples** to be taken for each sub-group of substances (Dec 97/747/EC). For third countries, the figures could only refer to exports to EU; in that case, garanties for appropriate segregation and control must be given (Directive 96/23/EC - Article 7§6).
→ Cf. Table

5. TARGETING CRITERIA

- 5.1. Results** from previous years.
- 5.2. Changes** based on analysis of the residue plan of the previous years (whereas such plans exists), particularly as regards problem areas identified (Directive 96/23/EC - Article 8§2).

Table summarising the annual requirements for residue monitoring plan (points 3. and 4. of the guidelines) - Honey

Country:

Total honey production (tonnes) exported to the EU the previous year :

Period covered by the plan:

Group of substances (Directive 96/23/EC)	Compounds analysed	Material analysed/ Method	Detection level	Level of action	Number of samples	Laboratory
B1 - Antibacterial substances, including sulphonamides, quinolones.						
B2c - Carbamates and pyrethroids						
B3a - Organochlorine compounds including PCBs						
B3b - Organophosphorus compounds						
B3c - Chemical elements						

Results obtained the previous year in carrying out the plan could be indicated in a similar table.