

Label Requirements for Honey in Ontario

All containers of honey that are sold, offered for sale, packed or transported within Ontario must be labelled with certain information. The information that is required on the label is set out in Ontario Regulation (O. Reg.) 119/11 Produce, Honey and Maple Products. A label can be any mark, stamp, tag, etc., as long as the label is applied to the container.

Label requirements depend on both the container size as well as the retail location.

- **Consumer containers between 150 grams and five kilograms require a label that includes:**
 - the name and full address (municipal address including postal code) of the packer or the person on whose behalf the honey is packed such as a retailer, producer or other person
 - the words "honey / miel" or "comb honey / miel en rayon" as applicable
 - the grade immediately followed by the colour class (comb honey excluded)
 - the net weight of the honey
 - a statement that comb honey contains cells of pollen, if applicable
 - the country or province of origin, if applicable

- **Consumer containers less than 150 grams require a label that includes:**
 - the name and full address (municipal address including postal code) of the packer or the person on whose behalf the honey is packed such as a retailer, producer, or other person
 - the words "honey / miel" or "comb honey / miel en rayon" as applicable
 - a statement that comb honey contains cells of pollen, if applicable
 - the country or province of origin, if applicable

- **Bulk containers (more than five kilograms) require a label that includes:**
 - the name and full address (municipal address including postal code) of the packer or the person on whose behalf the honey is packed such as a retailer, producer or other person
 - the words "honey / miel" or "comb honey / miel en rayon" as applicable
 - the grade immediately followed by the colour class (comb honey excluded) if the bulk container is sold or transported directly to a consumer or retail outlet
 - the net weight of the honey, except when the honey is sold from a bulk dispenser on a retail premise and poured into consumer containers at the time of purchase
 - a statement that comb honey contains cells of pollen, if applicable
 - the country or province of origin, if applicable

Example 1 – Minimum labelling requirements for consumer containers between 150 grams and five kilograms



Country or province of origin is only required when honey is produced:

- outside Ontario (another province or country) and brought into Ontario in bulk for repackaging and sale within Ontario (e.g., Product of Canada, Product of U.S.A.)
- outside Ontario (another province or country) and blended with Ontario produced honey for sale within Ontario (e.g., Product of Canada, Product of Ontario and Quebec, Product of Ontario and U.S.A.)

The requirements above do not apply to honey that is produced in the producer's apiary and sold directly to the consumer from the producer's place of residence. This is referred to as "Farm Gate" sales. In this case, the label must include:

- the name and full address (municipal address including postal code) of the producer
- the words "honey / miel" or "comb honey / miel en rayon" as applicable

Grade and colour classification are optional on a container of honey that is sold from "Farm Gate", but if indicated, must be correct and not misleading.

Example 2 – Minimum labelling requirements for honey sold from “Farm Gate”



Under O. Reg. 119/11 the following information is optional on labels for containers of honey:

- "Product of Ontario" if the honey is wholly produced and packaged in Ontario for sale in Ontario.
- a statement indicating a specific floral source. If a statement is made, the honey must meet the requirements or specifications in Table IV of the federal Honey Regulations under the *Canada Agricultural Products Act*.
- a statement that the honey is pasteurized, creamed or liquid. If a statement is made, the honey must meet the grade requirements for pasteurized honey, creamed honey or liquid honey described in Table 2 of the O. Reg. 119/11.

Additional information can be added to the label (e.g., website, phone number), but the information must not be false or misleading.

The label requirements in O. Reg. 119/11 are in addition to what is required by the federal *Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act* and the *Food and Drugs Act*, e.g., bilingual requirements or nutrition information on consumer containers.

O. Reg. 119/11 also sets out requirements for labels on honey substitutes. A honey substitute is a product that resembles honey and is prepared for the same uses as honey, but is not 100% pure honey. The honey substitute may include honey as an ingredient, but not the sole ingredient. The label for a honey substitute cannot contain any words (e.g., grade, colour class), pictures or designs that could lead a person to think that the substitute is 100% honey, but the word “honey” can be used on the label of the substitute as long as honey is an ingredient in the substitute. For example, if a producer is adding cinnamon to honey, this product is considered a ‘honey substitute’.

The label cannot have a grade or colour class. The producer can label the product “Cinnamon Honey”.

O. Reg. 119/11 labelling requirements do not apply to honey that is packed in a federally registered establishment, a place registered with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. More information on federal requirements and federal legislation can be found on the CFIA website at www.inspection.gc.ca.

This document is for informational purposes only. In the event of an error or omission, please take notice that the *Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001* and O. Reg. 119/11 prevail. For complete regulatory requirements, please refer to Ontario Regulation 119/11 at www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/110119.

False or misleading information on any honey label is prohibited by the *Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001* and Ontario Regulation 119/11.

More information on O. Reg. 119/11 and honey labelling and packaging requirements can be found on the Foods of Plant Origin website at www.ontario.ca/producesafety.

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