



Canadian Food
Inspection Agency

Agence canadienne
d'inspection des aliments

Canadian Food Inspection Agency

Honey authenticity surveillance results (2019 to 2020)



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ISBN: 978-0-660-98075-1

Cat. No.: A104-696/2026E-PDF

Aussi disponible en français.

Introduction

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) conducted targeted surveillance activities between 2019 and 2020 as part of ongoing efforts to detect misrepresentation of honey adulterated with foreign sugars in both domestic and imported honey sold in Canada.

The sampling, testing, and collaboration was similar to the surveillance conducted in 2018 and 2019 and summarized in the report: [Enhanced Honey Authenticity Surveillance \(2018 – 2019\)](#). As in 2018-19, each sample was tested using both Stable Isotope Ratio Analysis (SIRA) and Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) analyses.

Surveillance overview

A total of 275 samples were collected across Canada and tested for adulteration with foreign sugars using Stable Isotope Ratio Analysis (SIRA) and Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) methodologies. The 2019-20 sampling approach differed from the previous year in that 2 types of sampling were conducted.

Targeted sampling

CFIA inspectors collected 127 samples where the chance of non-compliance was higher, based on risk-factors such as a history of non-compliance, gaps in preventive controls, or unusual trading patterns. Products sampled included single-ingredient honey products such as bulk and honey for further processing from importers and a small proportion from domestic establishments.

Marketplace monitoring

The CFIA contracted an independent third party to collect 148 honey samples at retailers in various cities across Canada as part of CFIA's compliance monitoring of the marketplace, to gauge overall compliance. All samples were prepackaged single ingredient honey as sold to consumers. The results from these surveys are used by the CFIA to carry out targeted sampling, where non-compliance is most likely.

Authorities

A CFIA inspection and enforcement activities were carried out as part of this surveillance strategy under the authorities of the:

- *Safe Food for Canadians Act and Safe Food for Canadians Regulations*
- *Food and Drugs Act and Food and Drug Regulations*

Results

The 2019 to 2020 results are provided according to sampling type as follows:

Targeted sampling

- Of the 127 samples collected, 16 were domestic, 111 were imported
- 110 samples were satisfactory by both SIRA and NMR methods: 86.6% (110/127)
- 17 samples were unsatisfactory by one or both methods: 13.3% (17/127)
- Of these 17 unsatisfactory results, 16 were imported and 1 was domestic

Marketplace monitoring

- Of the 148 samples, 103 were domestic, 45 were imported
- 145 samples were satisfactory by both SIRA and NMR methods: 98% (145/148)
- 3 samples were unsatisfactory by one or both methods: 2% (3/148)
- Of these 3 unsatisfactory results, all were identified as imported

It is important to note that samples collected by CFIA inspectors (targeted sampling), were based on risk factors for non-compliance. Therefore these results indicate a lower compliance rate and are not representative of the Canadian marketplace overall.

The detailed analytical results are available on the [Open Government Portal](#).

Enforcement

As a result of CFIA's actions, an estimated 83,461 kg of adulterated honey was prevented from being sold in the Canadian marketplace between April 1, 2019 and March 31, 2020.

Control and enforcement activities conducted by CFIA staff are guided by the [Standard Regulatory Response Process](#). Enforcement actions are considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration the harm caused by the non-compliance, the compliance history of the regulated party, and whether there is intent to violate federal requirements. CFIA continues to follow up on all products found to be non-compliant.

Regulated parties are [reminded of regulatory requirements and of their obligations](#) to have in place preventive control plans to mitigate risks and prevent re-occurrence.

The CFIA publishes information regarding [compliance and enforcement activities](#) on a quarterly basis. These include reports of non-compliant and disposed of food products, which will continue to be updated following the publication of this summary.

Next steps

The CFIA will continue its risk-based inspection and surveillance of high-risk food commodities to help verify that food products are accurately represented for Canadians, and work with industry to remind them of their responsibility to comply with food regulations.