

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
DIVISION OF FOOD SAFETY

GUIDELINES FOR THE SANITARY OPERATION OF
HONEY EXTRACTING FACILITIES

All honey producers in PA must register as a Food Establishment. The registration fee is \$35.00/year. Honey producers that are registered with a fee may legally place the statement “Reg. PA Dept of Agr.” on their product labels.

Exempt from registration fees, but not inspection, are “food establishments that are in compliance with the Honey Sale and Labeling Act **and** in which **100%** of the honey offered for human consumption is produced or processed **on the farm** in which the food establishment is located”. Exempt honey processors may voluntarily register with a fee, if they desire to label their products as above.

Below is a general guideline* for sanitation of a honey production site. This is not a complete list of potential requirements. Any requirements under the Code of Federal Regulations may apply. Any persons selling interstate should contact their local FDA office and register as a food processor.

- **FLOOR, WALLS AND CEILINGS:** The floors, walls, and ceilings of the facility shall be kept in good repair and adequately cleaned.
- **VENTILATION:** All ventilating openings shall be screened or equipped with mechanical devices to exclude insects. NOTE—It is understood that it is impossible to keep all bees out of an extracting facility, but they shall be kept to a minimum.
- **LIGHTING:** Lights over exposed food zones shall be protected against adulteration through breakage. All facilities shall have sufficient light to permit efficient operations including cleaning.
- **WATER SUPPLY:** The water supply shall be adequate for the operation and convenient to the operation of the facility. Hot water shall be available for cleaning. All facilities shall have potable water. The supply should be tested approximately two weeks before the extraction process of the season.
- **SANITARY FACILITIES:** Toilet and hand washing facilities for the operation shall be convenient to the operation. The facility must be maintained in good repair and in a sanitary fashion.
- **VECTOR CONTROL:** Pests of any kind should not be in a food establishment. No chemicals or poisons shall be used to control insects or rodents while supers of honey are stored in the facility or extracting of honey is in process. Follow label instructions on pesticide containers; only use approved pesticides. PETS are not allowed in the honey processing, extraction or bottling site.
- **EXTRACTION COMBS:** Honey shall be extracted only from combs that are free from brood of the bees and/or larva of wax moths.
- **EQUIPMENT:** Extractors and tanks shall be of non-corrosive finish, or shall be lacquered or painted with lacquers of paint of a type approved for food contact.
- **WASHING EQUIPMENT:** Extractors and tanks shall be washed at the beginning and end of the extracting season. Extractors shall be covered when not in use.
- **PRODUCERS RETURNABLE BULK CONTAINERS:** Before refilling all used bulk containers; the outside shall be cleaned but not necessarily the inside.
- **RAW HONEY:** Honey for further processing shall be as clean as if run through an 18-mesh strainer.
- **WORKERS:** Shall wear clean, washable clothing and shall keep hands clean at all times. Hair restraint shall be worn. Workers may not process honey or honey products when ill.
- **VEHICLES:** Truck floors shall be cleaned before hauling supers of honey.
- **PORTABLE EXTRACTING PLANTS:** Portable extracting facilities and equipment shall meet all cleanliness requirements of stationary plants.
- **LABELING:** Honey must be in compliance with the Act of July 20, 1974, Honey Sale and Labeling Act. Honey must additionally be labeled as required under the Code of Federal Regulations.

*This is NOT an all inclusive list of requirements for a honey production site, but is intended to be a general guideline of food safety issues that must be addressed.