

Honey is an excellent product for direct marketing because it provides an opportunity for the buyer to experience each unique flavor and aroma before purchasing. Regardless of the blossom source Washington honey must be labeled and graded prior to sale. Hives must also be registered.

This fact sheet includes information on:

- selling honey to the end consumer;
- selling honey wholesale;
- labeling honey;
- grading honey; and
- registering hives.

Selling Honey to the End Consumer

Beekeepers who extract their own honey can sell it in the raw form to the end consumer. They do not need a WSDA Food Processor's License. Honey must be free from all contaminants.

If the honey is processed in some way (e.g., heated, pasteurized, or added ingredients or flavors), then you will need to be a licensed with the WSDA as a food processor.

Selling Honey Wholesale

Honey that is wholesaled or processed (blended, spun, heated, etc) must be licensed under RCW 69.07. For more information, please visit the WSDA Food Safety Program online at <http://agr.wa.gov/FoodAnimal/FoodProcessors> or email at foodsafety@agr.wa.gov or call (360) 902-1876.

Labeling Honey

Washington State law requires that honey be labeled with the following information:

- Identification of the product ("honey")
- Name and address of the producer
- The net weight and grade of the honey.

Grading Honey

For retail sale, honey must be graded. For the USDA standards for grading honey, see the United States Standards for Grades of Extracted Honey at www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/gefile?dDocName=STELDEV3011895

Registering Hives

In Washington State, all hives, whether for home or commercial use, must be registered with WSDA Plant Protection Division before April 1 of each year. Registration is required for any of the following:

- a person owning one or more hives;
- brokers renting hives; and
- apiarists that reside in other states who operate hives in Washington.

Annual registration fees are based on a sliding scale, from \$5.00 for 1 to 5 colonies to \$300.00 for 1,001 colonies or more.

Registration of hives provides official documentation that can be useful in the event of colony loss through poisoning or natural disaster. Fees are used to fund apiary research, as determined by the Apiary Advisory Board. While currently inactive, the board directs funding and research needs to the WSDA Director, as stated in state law.

Beekeepers with questions regarding registration of beehives, or that have interest in participating in advisory board activities should contact WSDA Plant Protection Division at (360) 902-2070, email PestProgram@agr.wa.gov, or visit <http://agr.wa.gov/PlantsInsects/Apiary>.

Recommended Fact Sheet: Food Processing

For further assistance or to make suggestions on how to improve this fact sheet, please email smallfarms@agr.wa.gov or call (360) 902-2057 or (360) 676-2059.