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SWEDEN | DENMARK | NORWAY

PP-255 [Beekeeping Technology and Quality]

European Honey Contest in Koper, Slovenia 2024

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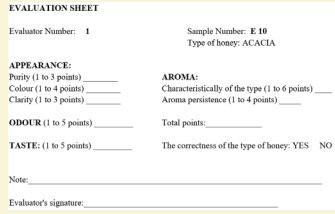
Introduction

When consumers want to buy honey, they are faced with a wide choice. A study conducted by the EU Commission, published in 2023, revealed that 46% of imported honey is suspected of being adulterated. Beekeepers must find new ways to guarantee high quality and authenticity to sell their premium products at a fair price. International honey competitions, such as the European Honey Contest, offer an opportunity to verify and showcase the excellence of their honey.

Methodology

To ensure an objective and professional sensory evaluation of honeys from different European countries, an expert 10-member international panel of honey assessors was assembled. The sensory assessment was based on scoring of the following criteria in accordance with the Rules of the Board of the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association for the sensory evaluation of honey: **appearance**, **odour**, **taste**, and **aroma correspondence to declared botanical origin**; with a maximum total score of 30 points.



EVALUATION SHEET

Evaluator Number: 1
Sample Number: E 10
Type of honey: ACACIA

APPEARANCE:
Purity (1 to 3 points) _____
Colour (1 to 4 points) _____
Clarity (1 to 3 points) _____

AROMA:
Characteristically of the type (1 to 6 points) ____
Aroma persistence (1 to 4 points) ____

ODOUR (1 to 5 points) _____
Total points:_____

TASTE: (1 to 5 points) _____
The correctness of the type of honey: YES NO

Note:_____

Evaluator's signature:_____

The evaluation sheet showing point allocations for different criteria.

Honey categories were not predefined; for a category to be evaluated, it had to include at least seven samples. If there were fewer than seven, the committee for sample preparation categorized them as either forest (honeydew) or multifloral honey based on electrical conductivity. All samples had to meet strict quality criteria, including a **water content of less than 18.6%** and a **hydroxymethylfurfural (HMF) content of no more than 15 mg/kg**.

Results and Conclusions

A total of 114 samples from 11 European countries were submitted for evaluation. Five categories of honey were defined:

Acacia (Black Locust) honey

Multifloral honey

Forest honey

Linden honey

Chestnut honey

To highlight the best honeys, only the three best samples in each category were awarded gold, silver and bronze medals. Prior to the award ceremony, the honeys were also tested for **authenticity** and the **presence of acaricides**.

The owners of the award-winning honey samples and their respective countries:

Acacia honey
1. Josip Pintar, Croatia
2. Peter Kolar, Slovenia
3. dr. Balázs Kolics, Hungary

Multifloral honey
1. Franc Hočevar, Slovenia
2. Vesna Komac, Slovenia
3. Gyula Ács, Hungary

Forest honey
1. Beekeeping Jelenc, Slovenia
2. Jozef Volansky, Slovakia
3. Jernej Benedičič, Slovenia

Linden honey
1. Zvonko Sedmak, Slovenia
2. Róbert Hanzel, Hungary
3. Marjan Lapanja, Slovenia

Chestnut honey
1. Tilen Velkovrh, Slovenia
2. Luka Jurečič, Slovenia
3. Simon Korošec, Slovenia

All 15 award-winning honeys were presented at an event in the European Parliament on World Bee Day, 20 May 2025.

https://www.honey-contest.eu/

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Background/purpose
When consumers want to buy honey, they are faced with a wide choice. A study conducted by the EU Commission, published in 2023, revealed that 46% of imported honey is suspected of being adulterated. Beekeepers must find new ways to guarantee high quality and authenticity to sell their premium products at a fair price. International honey competitions, such as the European Honey Contest, offer an opportunity to showcase and verify the excellence of their honey.

Problem description
To ensure an objective and professional sensory evaluation of honeys from different European countries, an expert committee of experienced domestic and international honey assessors was assembled. The award-winning samples must exhibit the most characteristic sensory properties in their respective category and meet the high-quality and safety standards.

Methodology
The evaluation of honey was conducted by a 10-member expert committee in accordance with the Rules of the Board of the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association for the sensory evaluation of honey. The sensory assessment was based on scoring of the following criteria: appearance, odour, taste, and aroma correspondence to declared botanical origin; with a maximum total score of 30 points. Honey categories were not predefined; for a category to be evaluated, it had to include at least seven samples. If there were fewer than seven samples, the evaluation committee categorized them as either forest (honeydew) or multifloral honey based on electrical conductivity. All samples had to meet strict quality criteria, including a water content of less than 18.6% and a hydroxymethylfurfural (HMF) content of no more than 15 mg/kg.

Results and conclusions
A total of 114 samples from 11 European countries were submitted for evaluation. Five categories of honey were defined: acacia, multifloral, forest, linden, and chestnut honey. To highlight the best honeys, only the three best samples in each category were awarded gold, silver and bronze medals. Prior to the award ceremony, they were also tested for authenticity and the presence of acaricides.

Practical implications for beekeepers
The 15 award-winning beekeepers were presented with certificates for high quality and safety, which serve as an excellent marketing tool and guarantee of authenticity for consumers.