



Labelling Honey for Sale

Food Standards Code labelling requirements

The *Food Standards Code* sets out when food for sale needs to have a label, or have information displayed in connection with its sale, and what information is required (s 1.2.1 FSC).

If food is sold at the premises where it is made, produced and packaged (i.e. the “farm gate”), it only needs certain information displayed in connection with its sale, it doesn’t need a label. Otherwise, food for sale that is in a package, i.e. honey, does need a label.

Country of Origin food labelling

The *Country of Origin Food Labelling Information Standard 2016* commenced on 1 July 2016, and requires most food suitable for retail sale in Australia to carry country of origin information. Retail sale of food in Australia is defined as: food sold to the public in stores or markets, online or from vending machines. Packaged food offered for sale must carry country of origin labelling.

Honey is a priority food under the Standard, and as such, honey packaging must carry a graphic and text-based label known as a “standard mark” i.e. the yellow kangaroo on a green triangle plus text and percentage indicator bar.



The Government has created an online tool that helps with assessing whether you need a country of origin mark, and then generating a downloadable logo in PDF or PNG formats to use on your label: <https://business.gov.au/products-and-services/product-labelling/country-of-origin-labelling-online-tool>.

Summary of information to be displayed with honey sold at the farm gate

- (a) name of the food, i.e. honey;
- (b) advisory statements and declarations – only in relation to products with pollen or royal jelly;
- (c) if a nutrition or health claim is made and requires nutrition information to prove—a nutrition information panel; and
- (d) information about the origins of the food or its ingredients.

Summary of labelling requirements for honey sold at markets etc.

- (a) name of the food, i.e. honey;
- (b) lot identification;
- (c) name and address of supplier;
- (d) advisory statements, warning statements, declarations – only in relation to products with pollen or royal jelly;
- (e) a statement of ingredients;
- (f) date marking information;
- (g) storage conditions and directions for use;
- (h) a nutrition information panel; and
- (i) a graphic and text based label indicating country of origin.

Honey sold at the farm gate	Honey sold at markets etc.
<p>Name of the food, i.e. honey</p> <p>Food named and sold as “honey” must be honey and contain no less than 60% reducing sugars and no more than 21% moisture.</p> <p>It is best to market and sell honey indicating its exact geographical origin.</p> <p>It is acceptable to name honey according to its floral source provided accurate, e.g. Australian Yellow Box Honey. The source of the honey such as yellow gum, mixed floral, etc, can be included but is NOT mandatory.</p>	
	<p>Lot identification</p> <p>Harvest or extraction date or the packing date. Best before date may be difficult to correlate.</p>
	<p>Name and address of supplier</p> <p>It is acceptable to use your name or a registered business name. The label must also have a full street address including street name and number town or suburb and state.</p>
<p>Advisory / warning statements - only in relation to products that contain pollen or royal jelly</p> <p>Honey on its own does not require any health or allergy warning statements. You do NOT have to declare presence of pollen, propolis or royal jelly unless it has been added intentionally.</p> <p>Similarly labelling does NOT have to carry a warning about not feeding honey to infants under 12 months of age due to risk of botulism.</p>	
	<p>Statement of ingredients</p> <p>Ingredients labelling for honey is simple so long as it is only honey. Ingredients must be listed in order of descending weight.</p>
	<p>Date marking information</p> <p>Date marking is not required for foods with a best before date of 2 years or more. Honey will remain marketable after 2 years so long as the packaging is intact and is stored correctly - this may require directions for use and storage.</p>
	<p>Storage conditions and directions for use</p> <p>This code requires directions for use and storage if specific conditions are required. “Store in a cool, dry place” is sufficient.</p>

Honey sold at the farm gate	Honey sold at markets etc.																																	
	<p>Nutrition information panel</p> <p>Honey does not fall into the list of foods that are exempt from carrying a nutrition information panel.</p> <p>Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) has developed a honey nutrition label template calculator: https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/industry/npc/Pages/nutrition-panel-calculator.aspx</p> <p>The following table has been generated from this website as an example, and relates to a 500g container of honey with honey nominated as the only ingredient.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="810 752 1267 1160"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="3">NUTRITION INFORMATION</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td colspan="3">Servings per package: 66</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">Serving size: 15 g</td> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>Average Quantity per Serving</th> <th>Average Quantity per 100 g</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Energy</td> <td>210 kJ</td> <td>1400 kJ</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Protein</td> <td>0 g</td> <td>0.2 g</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fat, total</td> <td>0 g</td> <td>0 g</td> </tr> <tr> <td>- saturated</td> <td>0 g</td> <td>0 g</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Carbohydrate</td> <td>12.3 g</td> <td>82.1 g</td> </tr> <tr> <td>- sugars</td> <td>12.3 g</td> <td>82.1 g</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sodium</td> <td>2 mg</td> <td>14 mg</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	NUTRITION INFORMATION			Servings per package: 66			Serving size: 15 g				Average Quantity per Serving	Average Quantity per 100 g	Energy	210 kJ	1400 kJ	Protein	0 g	0.2 g	Fat, total	0 g	0 g	- saturated	0 g	0 g	Carbohydrate	12.3 g	82.1 g	- sugars	12.3 g	82.1 g	Sodium	2 mg	14 mg
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<p>Information about the origins of the food or its ingredients</p> <p>Honey is a priority food under the <i>Country of Origin Labelling Standard</i>. If the honey is sold in a package that is NOT required to have a label under the Food Standards Code, i.e. it is sold where it is produced - at the farmgate, then you must be able to provide information about the origins of the honey to a purchaser. This so the purchaser can comply with the relevant requirements if they use the honey in a product or otherwise on-sell it.</p>	<p>A graphic- and text- based label indicating country of origin</p> <p>Honey is a priority food under the <i>Country of Origin Labelling Standard</i>. If the honey is sold in a package that is required to have a label under the Food Standards Code, then its label must include a Country of Origin Label.</p> <p>The Government has created an online tool that helps with assessing whether you need a label, and then generating a downloadable file to use on your label: https://business.gov.au/products-and-services/product-labelling/country-of-origin-labelling-online-tool</p>																																	

References

ACCC, March 2021, *A guide for business: Country of Origin food labelling*, page 20 (Accessed 20 May 2021 at <https://www.accc.gov.au/system/files/Country%20of%20origin%20food%20labelling.pdf>)

Food Standards Australia New Zealand, *Food Standards Code* (Accessed 20 May 2021 at <https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/code/Pages/default.aspx>)

B-Qual Australia, December 2018 newsletter, *Are you up to date with the new food label laws?*, page 4 (Accessed 20 May 2021 at <https://bqual.com.au/Assets/files/BQ%20December%20news.pdf>).