

Statement from the Honey Association (British Honey Importers and Packers Association) with reference to the Issue of Genetically Modified Crops

Honey is a pure and natural product that contains no materials other than those gathered by foraging bees.

With the exception of our Associate Member, the Bee Farmers Association of the UK, Members of The Honey Association are not producers of honey – they purchase honey from bee farmers in the UK and a number of producing regions around the world. The Honey Association's members operate to defined quality standards and demand these standards from all their honey suppliers.

It is The Honey Association's aim to ensure that all honey used and sold by its members in the UK remains non-GM, in accordance with recent EU legislation.

In the case of GM crop trials in the UK, The Honey Association works closely with the BBKA / BFA and supports the work being done to move hives outside a six mile radius of any test site.

The Honey Association is following developments that could affect honey.

The European Court of Justice (ECJ) issued a judgement in September 2011 that honey containing GM pollen falls within the scope of EU Regulation 1829/2003 (GM Regulation). Consequently the pollen in such honey must have a specific GM food authorisation before the honey can be placed on the market. The ECJ, in its judgement, also stated that pollen in honey is an ingredient within the meaning of article 6(4)(a) of Directive 2000/13/EC (Labelling Directive)

The EU Commission is now bringing forward a technical amendment to directive 2001/110/EC (Honey Directive) to clarify that pollen is not an ingredient but a constituent of honey. This would reflect in legislation the natural origin of honey as pollen enters the hive as a result of the activity of bees. This approach is also reflected in the Codex Standard for Honey. The Honey Association supports this approach.

The Honey Association has a structured monitoring programme in place, taking samples from origins worldwide. All analysis conducted to date on raw honey being processed by members of The Honey Association, and on finished product being sold, has proved negative.

Regular testing of honey deliveries by The Honey Association for the presence of GM material will continue.

Association members will continue discussion with suppliers of honey around the world to emphasise the requirement to maintain honey as a non-GM product. Members are continually looking to improve traceability of their honey supplies.