Producing a Value-Added Product on the Farm

LIQUID HONEY

TWO SALES CAPS: $50K OR $75K

Producing a value-added product can be a great way to generate additional revenue. The information on this sheet may help you decide if adding a product is right for you and take you through the major steps involved.

~5 million **pounds of honey are collected in Michigan each year,** according to the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service.

SELLING OPTIONS

- Direct to consumer
- Wholesale to stores, eateries, breweries, and meaderies
- Sold through distributors
- Online sales
- Across state lines

EQUIPMENT FOR HONEY EXTRACTION

- Extractor
- Strainers
- Jars/containers
- Plastic bottles, lids for plastic bottles
- Glass jars, lids for glass jars
- Plastic food safe buckets
- Uncapping table
- Settling tank or gated bucket
- Hive tools (scrubbed clean before use)
- Hand uncapping tools (e.g. electric hot knives, knives, forks)
- Towels and warm water (for cleaning up drips of honey)
- Room/space: floors, tables/counters, etc.
- Cleaning supplies

PROCESSING HONEY

- **Start with clean and sanitary hands, equipment, and workspace.**
- **Extraction:** Honey extraction typically involves removing the wax cappings with an uncapping tool and then spinning the frame in an extractor so that the honey comes out of the combs.
- **Straining:** Honey is strained after extraction to reduce air and debris (wax, foam, bees, etc.)
- **Settling:** Honey is settled in a gated food-safe bucket or gated settling tank to allow air bubbles to float to the top. Honey is often settled for at least 24 hours. The gate draws honey from the middle, which should be nearly free of debris.
- **Bottling:** Bottling can be done with a gated bucket, bottling tank, or bottling machine.
- **Labeling**: Honey containers should be labeled before sold.
- **Liquefying:** While honey that has crystallized can be sold, some consumers may expect or prefer honey in liquid form. Honey can be liquefied in an incubator or warm room. Honey that is bottled in glass jars or in food-safe buckets can be liquefied in a warm water bath.

REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

- Pure honey does not fall under the Michigan Cottage Food Law. A license from Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is not required if honey sales generate ≤$50,000 (or ≤$75,000 when two or more sales are made at ≥$250 a unit).
- Local zoning ordinances apply.
- Producers shall follow general Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP's) when storing, handling, and bottling honey.

THIS RESOURCE WAS DEVELOPED BY:

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Center for Regional Food Systems
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Product Center Food • Ag • Bio
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension
Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development

FOOD SAFETY

- Ensure **employees are healthy** before working with foods.
- Follow **proper handwashing** protocols for food safety, ensuring hands are clean and gloves are worn.
- **Ensure clean processing facility space**. The area used to produce and bottle honey should be clean and not pose a risk of potential product contamination.
- Use only **food safe materials** for all food contact surfaces, packaging and storage containers. For example, it is NOT acceptable to use empty oil drums or chemical containers to store honey.
- **Four steps to clean and sanitize equipment:**
  1. Wash
  2. Rinse
  3. Sanitize
  4. Air dry
- Scrub equipment with hot, soapy dishwater solution (fragrance/dye free soap) or diluted bleach solution to remove residue from surfaces.
- Written best practices, or **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), are recommended**, but not required.

*Follow manufacturer directions for proper sanitization.

Watch this video from the University of Amherst Extension for ideas on properly cleaning and sanitizing.

LABELS MUST INCLUDE:

- Name of business **or** owner name **AND** address of production site
- Must state "honey," the product's standard identity
- Net weight in grams, ounces, or pounds (not volume)
- The following statement in the lower third of the label in 11pt font or larger: "Processed in a facility not inspected by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development"
- Floral sources and terms like "raw," "local," "natural," "pure," and "unfiltered" are not regulated
- If organic certified, may include "organic"
- Nutrition facts labels are not required

EXPLORE THESE RESOURCES
To get started with producing honey on your farm

- Starting and Keeping Bees in Michigan: Rules and Regulations
  Michigan State University Extension
- Rules and Regulations for Selling Honey in Michigan
  Michigan State University Extension
- Michigan Maple Syrup and Honey Licensing Exemptions
  Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development
- Michigan Cottage Food Law
  Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development
- Hygienic Design of Small Scale Produce Farms
  University of Vermont Extension
- Generally Accepted Agriculture and Management Practices (GAAMPs)
  Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development
- Beekeeping Basics – Don't Panic, It's Organic, Or Is It?
  Michigan State University
- Find a local beekeepers association
  Michigan Beekeepers Association
- Beekeeping and Pollinators Resources
  Michigan State University Extension



Visit MSU Center for Regional Food Systems at foodsystems.msu.edu to find the resources used to develop these materials.

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