

Understanding honey fraud and the role of authenticity testing

27.3.2026 - | Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs

Article explores concerns over honey adulteration and the work of jointly funded Framework for interrogation of honey authenticity databases.

Honey fraud, including the adulteration of honey with cheap sugar syrups and mislabelling of origin, remains a high-profile and contentious issue.

A recent article by The Grocer explores how investigations and testing programmes have raised potential concerns about the authenticity of some imported, lower-cost and blended honeys, but also highlights significant disagreement over the reliability and interpretation of current analytical methods, including advanced techniques such as nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR). The Framework for interrogation of honey authenticity databases, jointly funded by the Government Chemist and Defra, is referenced as part of this discussion.

The article outlines how increasingly sophisticated fraud practices can evade detection. It also notes how complex global supply chains can limit traceability and increase uncertainty.

Stakeholders hold differing views on the scale of the issue. Retailers and industry bodies point to due diligence measure and existing controls, while beekeepers and campaigners argue that these are insufficient and that fraud continues to affect legitimate producers and consumer confidence.

Overall, the article concludes that while indicators of fraud exist, variation in testing methods and the absence of harmonised approaches mean the extent of honey fraud remains unclear. This reinforces the need for continued improvements in analytical testing methods, greater transparency, and stronger international alignment.

Read the article

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/understanding-honey-fraud-and-the-role-of-authenticity-testing>