

HONEY AND BEESWAX

In judging beeswax or honey exhibits, the judge should decide on a standard method of deducting points. If the entry calls for six 1-pound (0.45 kg) jars of liquid honey, and if foreign material is located in three jars, then 1 point per jar may be deducted. Decide on the method of deducting points for every exhibit in the section. The scale of points shown in this circular are standard across Canada, which is an advantage both to judges and exhibitors.

Liquid Honey Class

Score-Card

	Points
Appearance and uniformity of containers	5
Uniform level of fill	5
Colour	5
Freedom from crystals.....	15
Freedom from foreign material	15
Freedom from air bubbles either in suspension or as froth	15
Uniformity of honey	5
Brightness.....	10
Flavour and aroma.....	10
Density 17 per cent or less	15

Requirements – As indicated in the prize list.

Appearance and Uniformity of Containers –

Appearance: Judge considers serious flaws on glass, rusty or scratched tops, also stickiness on tops of glass.

Uniformity: All containers and tops should be of identical size, shape, and colour.

Uniform Level of Fill – The air-space should not be visible when the cap is in place and the jar is standing upright. The measurement from the honey surface to the top of the jar should be the same in all jars.

Colour – If the colour of an exhibit is approaching the next lower classification, it will lose points. If a honey is entered in the wrong color class, it will be disqualified.

Freedom from Crystals – Liquid honey that has started to granulate (form sugar crystals) has an unattractive appearance. Honey will maintain its liquid condition if it is heated to 160° F. (70° C) in a hot-water bath until all signs of granulation have disappeared and then cooled rapidly. Take care not to darken the honey by overheating. Place sealer rings or wood under the honey jars so that they will not be in direct contact with the heat.

Freedom from Foreign Material – With proper straining and clean containers, there should be very few specks in the honey. Any specks that can be seen should be removed by means of a soda straw. Hold your index finger over the top of the straw as it is lowered into the honey. When the lower end is directly over the speck, remove your finger and some of the honey and the speck will rise into the straw. Close the top again and lower the straw over another speck. One straw will remove several specks if you start with the speck nearest the top and work toward those at the bottom of the jar. Hold your finger over the straw as you remove it from the honey.

Freedom from Air bubbles either in Suspension or as Froth – Air bubbles in honey are not as serious as foreign material but detract from its appearance. Try to avoid their creation by careful handling of the honey. Warming the honey will help bring bubbles to the surface as foam. Remove foam or froth with a teaspoon.

Uniformity of Honey – Honey in all jars should have the same density, flavor, color, and appearance.

Brightness – Bubbles, granulation, and dingy glass give an exhibit a dull appearance. Bubbles and granulation have been dealt with elsewhere. Jars may be given a sparkle by dipping in a hot water-vinegar solution and drying them on a lint-free towel for polishing with a glass polish. They should be wrapped in paper napkins after polishing. Do not use newspaper or aluminum foil. Honey sometimes looks dull and loses points because it contains colloidal material over which the beekeeper has no control.

Flavour and Aroma – Since people differ in their senses of taste and smell, too much emphasis is not placed on flavour and aroma. Points are lost if the honey has a disagreeable or foreign flavor.

Density 17 Per Cent or Less – Entries are marked down 1 point for each one-tenth of 1 per cent moisture in excess of 17 per cent. A refractometer is required to determine such degrees of moisture. A judge lacking a refractometer should up-end the jars. In the light-bodied honeys the bubble will rise more quickly than in the heavy-bodied honeys. The size of the air bubble should be given consideration, since the larger the air bubble, the faster it will rise. If this method is to be employed by a honey judge, it would be well to assemble all competing honeys at a common point long enough for them to acquire a common temperature. One other method which is sometimes employed in testing density is that which is known as “piling”. To use this system, a wooden ice-cream spoon or any other suitable instrument is used. The lid is removed from the jar and the honey is then piled above the surface level of the honey by dipping the spoon into the honey several times. The longer the pile remains above the surface level before finally leveling out, the denser the honey. The judge would give more marks to the heavier honeys.

Granulated Honey Class

Score-Card

	Points
Appearance and uniformity of containers	5
Uniform level of fill	5
Colour.....	5
Firmness of set.....	15
Freedom from foreign material	15
Freedom from froth and frosting.....	15
Uniformity of honey, including texture.....	10
Flavour and aroma.....	10
Texture of granulation	20

Requirements – As indicated in the prize list.

Appearance and Uniformity of Containers – Same as for liquid honey.

Uniform Level of Fill – Same as for liquid honey.

Colour – Granulated honey is usually a white honey class and should be considered such unless otherwise indicated. Colour in this class is a visual comparison of the various exhibits in their granulated condition, not as they would appear in their liquid condition in the classifier. The highest marks are given to the whitest exhibit.

Firmness of Set – Granulation should be complete and firm but not so hard that it will not spread.

Freedom from Foreign Material – Any specks must be removed when the honey is liquid. Small specks show clearly against a white background. Those that fall to the bottom of the jar will be magnified by the thick glass there.

Freedom from Froth and Frosting – Air bubbles will appear as froth on the surface or streaks of white frosting in the honey. They should be avoided as much as possible.

Uniformity of Honey, Including Texture – The jars should be uniform in all respects.

Flavour and Aroma – Same as for liquid honey.

Texture of Granulation – The honey should have a fine, palatable granulation. Texture is determined by rolling a small amount of honey against the palate with the tongue. A butter-like smoothness is desirable.

Comb Honey Class (Sections)

Score-Card

	Points
Quality and uniformity of wooden sections	5
Cleanliness of wooden sections.....	20
Completeness of fill appropriate to the sections used	20
Completeness of capping.....	10
Cleanliness and appearance of cappings	20
Quality and flavour.....	10
Uniformity of combs	15

Requirements – As indicated in the prize list.

Quality and Uniformity of Wooden Sections – Here the judge is considering the wooden frame around the comb. Quality refers to the whiteness, polish, dovetailing, squareness, and lack of imperfections in the wood. Uniformity requires that all sections be of one type; i.e., 4" x 5", (10.16 X 12.7 cm) 4¼" x 4¼" (10.8 X 10.8 cm) with beeway, or 4¼" x 4¼" (10.8 X 10.8 cm) without beeway.

Cleanliness of Wooden Sections – This refers to the removal of all propolis, burr comb, and foreign material from the wooden sections. Use a knife blade and sandpaper. Care must be taken not to damage the cappings. A narrow pointed blade is required for removing propolis from the inner corners. Be careful that the propolis and wood scrapings do not enter open cells. If scrapings do enter open cells, they should be carefully removed with a toothpick.

Completeness of Fill Appropriate to the Sections Used – Passage-holes from one side of the comb to the other are difficult to avoid. Ideally, the entire wooden frame should be filled with comb. The judge also considers the thickness of the comb. Shallow comb or empty spaces are scored down. Excessively thick combs due to the use of improperly matched equipment or misplaced fences would also be scored down.

Completeness of Capping – Combs with uncapped cells of honey are scored down by the judge. Leave the comb sections long enough to have the cappings completed but not long enough for them to become darkened.

Cleanliness and Appearance of Cappings – The cells and the cappings which cover them are naturally white but become darkened as the bees add pollen and propolis to the wax. As the wax becomes darker, it becomes stronger and more useful to the bees. Dark combs are less attractive, and the longer the comb remains with the bees, the darker it will become.

Comb honey must be removed from the hive as soon as the bees have filled and capped the comb sections. Dark combs lose points. White combs gain points. Cleanliness refers to the absence of propolis, wood scrapings, or dirt on the surface of the comb or in open cells. Cappings should not be sticky with honey. Appearance refers to the whiteness and smoothness of the cappings. Mechanical damage to the comb in handling would be scored down. There is a wide variation in the appearance of comb sections produced by different colonies. The manner in which the cell is capped varies. Some colonies produce a capping that touches the honey in the cell. These cappings have a dull, greasy appearance. Preference is given combs with surfaces that are smooth, even, and snowy white in color.

Quality and Flavour – The granulation of comb honey lowers its quality, as does the presence of pollen or bee parts in the comb or the use of heavy foundation. Any fermentation would disqualify an exhibit. No points would be lost for flavor unless there was a disagreeable taste to the honey.

Uniformity of Combs – As indicated under “Appearance of Cappings”, combs produced by different colonies vary a good deal as to color, completeness of fill, and appearance of cappings. There is a real advantage in getting the twelve-comb exhibit sections from one colony if possible.

Beeswax Class Score-Card

	Points
Colour	30
Cleanliness.....	35
Uniformity of appearance.....	20
Freedom from cracking	15

Requirements – As indicated in the prize list.

Colour – The ideal color for beeswax is described as straw-colored, primrose, or canary yellow. This color should be clear, not cloudy.

Cleanliness – Beeswax should be free from honey, propolis, bee parts, or other impurities. If any specks are apparent on the bottom of the cake, they should be scraped away and wax cake remelted.

Uniformity of Appearance – Cakes should be the same size, shape, and color. Select 15 to 20 pounds (6.75-9 kg) of white raw wax cappings and process the entire lot at one time if possible. In this manner you should avoid the variations in color, size of cake, and cleanliness which may occur if each cake is processed at a different time.

Freedom from Cracking – Beeswax shrinks in cooling. If cooled too quickly, it will often show cracks in the upper surface. By covering the mould with a board and allowing it to cool at room temperature, cracking should be avoided. Handle the cakes carefully to avoid bruising and cracking.

Best Frame of Honey Class

Some local fairs and all 4-H exhibits have a class that calls for a comb of honey as removed from the hive. This is one of the easiest exhibits to prepare, but the beekeeper should provide a wooden stand for holding the exhibit. Choose a comb completely filled and capped. The cappings should have an even surface and be white. Brood-rearing darkens combs, and the best comb for exhibition is one that has been constructed, filled and capped during a strong flow of light-colored honey.

Take care not to damage the comb once it is removed from the colony. Let it hang free in a wooden box, such as an apple-box, with cleats to prevent it from moving once it is in place. Scrape the wooden frame free of propolis and then wrap the comb in cellophane or Saran wrap to protect it from flies. The following is a suggested scale of points for judging a frame of honey comb.

Score-Card

	Points
Suitability of wooden frame.....	10
Cleanliness of wooden frame	15
Completeness of fill.....	25
Completeness of capping.....	20
Cleanliness and appearance of cappings	20
Quality and flavor.....	10

Requirements – One comb from extracting super, standard, or shallow as indicated in the prize list.

Suitability of Wooden Frame – Frame should be properly nailed, with all corners at right angles and opposite sides parallel. There should be at least two horizontal supporting wires. Frame should be free of knots and splits that would weaken frame.

Cleanliness of Wooden Frame – Frame should be clean, white wood, scraped free of propolis.

Completeness of Fill – The comb should completely fill the frame, and all cells should be filled with honey.

Completeness of Capping – All cells of honey should be completely capped if possible.

Cleanliness and Appearance of Cappings – Cappings should be white without excessive travel stain and without mechanical damage, dust, or dirt. Cappings should present a level, even surface over the entire comb.

Quality and Flavour – Comb should be free of any brood or pollen. There should not be any noticeable difference in the honey in different parts of the comb. There should be no undesirable flavor to the honey. Honey in comb should be liquid, not granulated.

Shipping Honey or Beeswax Exhibits

Exhibits must often be shipped hundreds of miles. If care is not taken in packing, the exhibit may become damaged and present a very poor appearance on the show-bench.

Each comb section should be neatly wrapped in cellophane. The combs should then be placed in cardboard comb-section cartons with cellophane fronts. Each carton containing a comb section should be fitted tightly into a compartment of its own, surrounded on all sides by corrugated cardboard. The cardboard box containing the tightly packed comb sections is itself packed into a wooden or cardboard box containing excelsior so that the inner box is protected on all sides, top, and bottom by excelsior.

Liquid or Granulated Exhibits

The tops of the jars should be screwed on tight, and each jar wrapped separately in paper napkins. The filler in the cardboard case should be removed, and a sheet of corrugated cardboard placed in the bottom of the box. The filler is replaced, and each wrapped jar placed in its own compartment. The box should now be sealed with paper tape and tied with strong cord. "Fragile" and "Glass" stickers should be placed on the top and side of the shipping carton.

An express shipment of honey may be registered by paying a small additional fee. Registered packages receive special care and are more likely to arrive at their destination in good condition.

Beeswax

Each cake of beeswax should be separated from the next by crumpled paper. There should be plenty of crumpled paper or excelsior between the cakes of wax and the cardboard box. "Fragile" stickers should be placed on the top and side of the box.