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DRAFT EAST AFRICAN STANDARD

Bee pollen — Code of practice

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EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

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Contents

Page

Foreword ..... **iv**

1 Scope **1**

2 Conformance ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.

3 Normative references **1**

4 Terms and definitions **1**

5 Symbols (and abbreviated terms) **3**

6 Clause **4**
6.1 Subclause (level 1) ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
6.1.1 Subclause (level 2) ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
6.1.2 Subclause (level 2) ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
6.2 Subclause (level 1) ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.

7 Clause ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.

8 Special ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.

Annex A (normative) Annex title ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
A.1 General ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
A.2 Clause ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
A.2.1 Subclause (level 1) ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
A.2.2 Subclause (level 1) ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
A.3 Clause ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.

Annex B (informative) Which styles correspond to which element — Quick reference guide Error! Bookmark not

Bibliography **10**

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Foreword

Development of the East African Standards has been necessitated by the need for harmonizing requirements governing quality of products and services in the East African Community. It is envisaged that through harmonized standardization, trade barriers that are encountered when goods and services are exchanged within the Community will be removed.

The Community has established an East African Standards Committee (EASC) mandated to develop and issue East African Standards (EAS). The Committee is composed of representatives of the National Standards Bodies in Partner States, together with the representatives from the public and private sector organizations in the community.

East African Standards are developed through Technical Committees that are representative of key stakeholders including government, academia, consumer groups, private sector and other interested parties. Draft East African Standards are circulated to stakeholders through the National Standards Bodies in the Partner States. The comments received are discussed and incorporated before finalization of standards, in accordance with the principles and procedures for development of East African Standards. XXXXXX.

East African Standards are subject to review, to keep pace with technological advances. Users of the East African Standards are therefore expected to ensure that they always have the latest versions of the standards they are implementing.

The committee responsible for this document is Technical Committee EASC/TC 011 *Apiary and apiary products.*

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Introduction

Bee pollen, also known as bee bread and ambrosia, is a ball or pellet of field-gathered flower pollen packed by worker honeybees, and used as the primary food source for the hive. It consists of simple sugars, protein, minerals and vitamins, fatty acids, and a small percentage of other components. Bee pollen is stored in brood cells, mixed with saliva, and sealed with a drop of honey. Bee pollen is harvested as food for humans and marketed as having various, health benefits.

Good operating practices are essential for the consistent production of bee pollen that is fit for its intended purpose and that meets relevant regulatory requirements. This Code is useful for providing guidance on hygienic practices and process controls that directly or indirectly impact on the safety and suitability of bee pollen.

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Bee pollen — Code of practice

1 Scope

This Draft East African Standard prescribes guidelines for harvesting/collecting, processing, packaging, transportation and storage of bee pollen intended for human consumption.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

EAS 38, Labelling of pre-packaged foods

EAS 151, Hazard analysis critical control points (HACCP)—-Requirements

EAS 989, Bee pollen— specification

EAS 39, Hygiene in the food and drink manufacturing industry—code of practice.

EAS 12, Potable water— Specification

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

— ISO Online browsing platform: available at http://www.iso.org/obp

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

3.1 bee pollen

result of the agglutination of pollens collected by worker bees from flowers, with nectar (and/or honey) and salivary substances

3.2

apiarist/ Beekeeper

person who keeps honeybees in beehives

3.4.

contamination

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introduction or occurrence of a contaminant including a food safety hazard in a product or a processing environment

3.5

contaminant

Any substance not intentionally added to food, which is present in such food as a result of the production, processing, preparation, treatment, packaging transport and storage of such food or as a result of environmental contamination,

3.6

documentation

the accumulation, classification and dissemination of information relating to a process or procedure usually in written or electronic form

3.7

food safety

assurance that food will not cause harm to the consumer when it is prepared and consumed according to its intended use

3.8

food grade material

material, made of substances which are safe and suitable for their intended use by human and which will not impart any

toxic substance or undesirable odour or flavour to the product.

3.9

foreign matter

organic or inorganic material other than bee pollen.

3.10

Hazard

Biological, chemical, or physical agent or any other property that may cause a product to be unsafe for consumption.

3.11

non-compliance

Control point in the checklist is not fulfilled according to the requirements of the standards.

3.12

packaging

procedures for protecting the products by using suitable food grade material packages that do not compromise quality

and integrity of product.

3.13

personal protective equipment

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clothing and equipment selected or designed to protect the operator against contamination and injury during operation

3.14

produce

predominantly raw pollen

predominantly bee pollen

3.15

product integrity

the product meets all legitimate safety-related expectations and complies with all relevant legal and regulatory.

requirements.

3.16

processing

Collection, drying, packaging, storage and marketing of bee pollen

Collection, sorting, drying, packaging and storage of bee pollen

3.20

traceability

the ability to follow the movement of bee pollen through the entire value chain from production to consumption.

4 Composition, collection, harvesting, processing, storage, and handling of bee pollen

Operators should ensure the integrity of product throughout the processes within their control including harvesting, processing, packaging, storage and distribution.

4.1 Composition

Composition of bee pollen depends on different pollen producing plant species and can also vary from time to time (seasons) depending on the geographical location and climatic conditions It consists of simple sugars, protein, minerals, vitamins, fatty acids and a small percentage of other components.

The colour and chemical composition of bee pollen varies depending on the floral sources

It consists of simple sugars, protein, minerals, vitamins, fatty acids and a small percentage of other components

4.2 Collection, harvesting and handling

4.2.1 Bee pollen should be harvested/collected in warm and dry conditions.

4.2.2 Bee pollen should be collected using pollen traps. The pollen trap should be a frame that contains a mesh to allow the bee to enter the hive. The trap harmlessly removes the pollen from the hind legs of the worker bees and allows it to fall through the screen into a drawer where the pollen should be collected.

4.2.3 should

Contaminations in apiaries should be managed to ensure product integrity

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4.2.4 The trap should be removed from time to time to allow the bees continue to feed adequately.

4.2.5 Collected bee pollen should be temporarily stored in a ventilated container and transported to suitable premises for processing.

4.2.6 should

4.2.7 Bee pollen containers should be kept out of the sun to prevent ‘sweating’ and clumping of pellets, and to minimize microbiological growth.

4.2.8 Harvesting personnel should observe hygiene practices.

4.2.9 Harvesting tools should be of food grade material, durable, convenient to use and easy to clean.

4.3 Processing

4.4.1 General

4.4.1.1 To prevent deterioration, bee pollen should be processed soon after collection. The operator should ensure that bee pollen received for processing is fit for intended purpose.

4.4.2 Drying

4.4.2.1 Drying should be done in a suitable environment that will not compromise the quality and integrity of the product

4.4.2.3 Bee pollen should be dried to a final moisture content sufficient for the preservation of the product considering its intended packaging and storage conditions.

4.4.3 Cleaning

4.4.3.1 Bee pollen should not be contaminated with foreign and extraneous matter such as dead bees, wax moths, ants, insect parts, dust and any other impurities.

4.4.3.2 Bee pollen can be cleaned by any suitable device or technology that can not compromise its quality and integrity.

5 Storage

5.1 General

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5.1.1should

Bee pollen should be packaged in clean airtight containers immediately after drying and cleaning

5.1.2 To protect bee pollen from insects' infestation, sealed containers of bee pollen should be frozen for 24 – 48 hours then stored under normal refrigeration.

5.1.3 Bee pollen intended for human consumption should be stored in a deep freezer or as dried pellets in airtight containers at room temperature.

5.2. Cold chain management

5.2.1 Cold chain facilities should be available and should be in satisfactory structural conditions of adequate cleanliness.

5.2.2 Recommended produce temperature and humidity should be documented and be always maintained.

5.3 Freezing

5.3.1 Fresh bee pollen should be placed in a freezer without unnecessary delay, especially if the bee pollen is wet.

5.3.2 Bee pollen should be frozen at -18 °C for at least 48 h to destroy wax moth.

5.3.3 Contamination of the bee pollen should be prevented during freezing.

5.3.5 The freezer should have the capability to quickly freeze bee pollen to the required temperature.

5.3.6 The bee pollen should be loaded in the freezer in such a manner that allows effective freezing of the product.

6 Hygiene requirements

6.1 Contaminants

6.1.2 Processors should ensure an effective pest control system for the premise

6.1.3 Bee pollen should be free from contaminants such as rodent droppings, moulds and microbial contaminants, and pests.

6.1.4 Processors of bee pollen should require their suppliers to have an effective pest control system in place at the hive and storage facilities to minimize contamination of bee pollen by pests.

6.2 Hygiene of staff and environment

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A system should be established to monitor and assess compliance to the hygiene policy, EAS 39, and other applicable standards and for undertaking timely corrective actions

6.2.1 Personnel hygiene

6.2.1.1 A personnel hygiene policy should be established and implemented to ensure that bee pollen is not contaminated

through improper handling.

6.2.1.2 should

Operators should ensure that all processing handlers are periodically examined medically and issued with a Food Handlers Medical Certificate.

6.2.1.4 Personnel should wear personal protective equipment

6.2.2 Handling

6.3.2 The operator should determine the process flow and undertake an assessment to identify areas where risks to the quality or integrity of the product may occur and identify preventive measures.

6.3.3 These assessments should be documented and periodically updated.

6.3.4 Risks management should include implementing an effective personal hygiene policy.

6.3.5 Written instructions for acceptable personal hygiene should be visibly displayed at appropriate areas and enforced.

6.3.6 Visitors to manufacturing and storage areas should be sensitized on hygiene practices and wear protective clothing as appropriate.

6.3.7 A documented and effective training program should be in place to ensure that employees, contractors and sub-contractors are competent in assigned duties, and are conversant with hygiene, accidents, emergency procedures and any other issue critical to food safety.

6.3.8 The firm production unit should have a documented hygiene procedure/protocol for handling of product premised on the basis of a risk assessment and workers should be trained and evidence availed.

6.3.9 There should be a regular hygiene risk assessment of harvesting operations.

6.3.10 The containers, harvesting tools and other harvesting equipment that are continuously used should be appropriately cleaned, disinfected, and maintained in line with the hygiene procedures/protocols. A planned washing program should ensure that produce harvest containers are cleaned, and free from contamination.

6.3.11 Cleaning water should be free from microbial, heavy metal or other foreign body contaminants and where possible recycled and treated before reuse. Procedures and training programs should ensure. that all workers involved in handling of produce observe high standards of personal hygiene. Personal hygiene facilities including field toilets with hand washing facilities should be provided and kept clean.

6.3.12 To avoid contamination of product, field supervisors should ensure that field workers involved in handling of product are in good health and that field workers with communicable diseases are not

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knowingly employed in fields operations. Employees should be instructed to report to the supervisor if they are suffering from any illness either on arrival for work or during working hours.

6.3.13 Behavioural practices such as smoking, eating, chewing, and drinking should not be permitted in the immediate vicinity of harvesting, grading, packing, or storage operations. Where applicable, Signs should be displayed to this effect.

6.4 Incompatible goods

All incompatible items with produce including cleaning agents, lubricants among others, should be stored in designated areas away from product to prevent taint, ethylene damage or cross contamination of product.

6.4 Product Integrity

Operators should ensure the integrity of product consignment throughout the handling phases including harvesting/collection, processing, storage, transportation, repackaging where necessary.

7 Quality control and monitoring systems

7.1 Quality control

7.1.1 The operator should have a quality assurance system in place to ensure product quality and safety.

7.1.2 Quality control unit should be within the vicinity of the processing and storage facilities and should be equipped with quality control facilities, equipment, procedures, standards and records as required.

7.1.3 All measuring devices should have the necessary accuracy as required for inspection purposes. All equipment used for weighing, sizing, temperature monitoring or any other measuring devices should be calibrated regularly, and records maintained.

7.2 Traceability and inventory control

7.2.1 There should be a system in place for the identification of raw materials and products, and documentation that will allow any finished product to be traced back to the supplier and the apiaries that the bee product was sourced from; and to the next person or company that the product is transferred to for further processing, packing, or storage; distributed to; or sold to.

7.2.2 All outgoing products should be clearly identified and accompanied by appropriate documentation.

7.2.3 Inventories should be maintained for all raw materials (e.g. pollen) and finished products, including any non-compliant materials and products.

7.3 Records

7.3.1 The operator should ensure that the following records are kept and maintained:

a) Name and address of the producer apiarist and beekeeper

b) records of the weight, date of harvesting and delivery,

c) Location of the hive

d) Amount of bee pollen harvested in each hive

e) Type of beehive that the bee pollen was collected from

f) The flowering vegetation in season

g) The method used for storage.

7.3.2 Records of data showing non-compliance with the quality requirements specified in the quality system should be followed up with a written account of corrective measures taken.

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8 Personal protective equipment

8.1.2 As appropriate, all workers should be provided with personal protective equipment as per the requirements of

the relevant Occupational Safety and Health regulations and clause 4.5 of EAS 39.

8.1.3 Visitors should wear appropriate, wear protective clothing and adhere to other hygiene provisions in this code.

9 Construction of a processing unit

9.1 Construction of the processing unit should be such as to prevent the entry of domestic animals, insects, birds, rodents, among others. Effective control measures should be in operation and be fully documented.

9.2 Floors, doors and wall surfaces should be made of impervious, non-absorbent, non-toxic, washable materials, which are easy to clean and disinfect. Floors should be durable and allow easy drainage without leaving wet areas. Windows and doors should open and close easily.

9.3 Ceiling and overhead fixtures should be designed, constructed and finished to prevent the accumulation of dirt, growth of undesirable moulds, shedding of paint flakes or particles and also reduce condensation.

9.4 Windows and other openings should be constructed and finished to prevent the accumulation of dirt. Those that can be opened to the outside environment should be fitted with insect proof screens of appropriate mesh size.

9.5 There should be a glass and hard plastics handling policy to govern their use within the premises whenever they are used.

9.6 The use of glass should be avoided. Where glass is used, there should be a form of screening to prevent any broken glass contaminating the produce. All use of glass (windows, lights etc.) should be recorded and a system of inspection implemented to ensure that any breakages are rectified.

9.7 Lighting over inspection, grading and cold store areas should be adequate to allow effective inspection of produce.

9.8 The processing unit should have adequate ventilation in order to provide adequate air circulation and temperature control.

9.9 The height of grading, working tables and other facilities for work should be appropriate for the comfort of the workers.

9.10 Loading and dispatch areas should be roofed and proofed so as to prevent nesting.

10 Packaging

Bee pollen should be packed in food grade materials that secure product integrity.

11 Labelling

Labelling of packages of bee pollen should be done in accordance with the requirements of EAS 38 and EAS 989, and should include the following:

Name of plant species or vegetation type from which the bee pollen is derived

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12 Monitoring

12.1 Compliance to documented procedures should be regularly checked by the relevant competent authority.

12.2 Observations from monitoring and any corrective action taken (including restoration of control, product disposition and prevention of recurrence), should be monitored for compliance.

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Bibliography

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