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ICS 67.180.10

DRAFT EAST AFRICAN STANDARD

Code of practice for Honey

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EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

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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.

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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Code of practice for Honey

1 Scope

This Draft East African standard prescribes the code of practice for production, harvesting, processing, storage, packaging and transportation of honey.

This Standard applies to honey produced by Apis mellifera bees.

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 — Specification*

EAS 36, *Honey specification*

EAS 12, *Potable water –Specification*

EAS 39, *General principles of food hygiene — Code of practice*

3 Terms and definitions

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

3.1
Apiary

place where beehives are kept and managed for the purpose of raising honeybees and harvesting honey and other bee products

3.2
Honeybee

insect scientifically referred to as Apis mellifera species.

3.3
Honey bee colony

honeybee family consisting of thousands of individual honeybees living together as one social unit. honeybee family consisting of thousands of individual honeybees made of the three casts; queen, workers and drones living together as one social unit.

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3.4.
Combs

structure made from beeswax for raising young honeybees and the storage of beebread and honey.

3.5
Traditional beekeeping

Use of traditional equipment, tools and techniques for beekeeping, harvesting and processing honey and other honeybee products

3.6
Modern beekeeping

Keeping honeybees using technologies that allow management of honeybee colonies in modern beehives

3.7
Honey

natural sweet substance produced by honey bees of genus Apis from the nectar of plants or from secretions of living parts of plants or excretions of plant sucking insects on the living parts of plants, which the honeybees collect, transform by combining with specific substances of their own, deposit, dehydrate, store and leave in the honey comb to ripen and mature

3.8
Brood

Any immature stage of a honey bee including the egg, larva and pupa

3.9
Contamination

The presence of undesirable substances that can affect purity, quality, and safety of honey.

3.11
Honey super

box placed on top of a brood box of frame beehives for honey production

3.12
bee pollen

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

4 Production

Production of honey requires selection of appropriate bee hives, apiary sites, apiary setting and proper management practices. Hygienic operations should be maintained to minimize contamination.

4.1 General Requirements for Bee Hives

4.1.1 Requirements during the construction of traditional beehives

4.1.1.1 Traditional beehives should be properly constructed from durable and desirable materials

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4.1.1.2 shouldshouldThe material in use should not have a negative impact on the quality of the honey and should not be made of materials that are not approved for use in the production of food. unsuitable materials include: cement bricks; untreated metal containers such as drums; faecal material such as cow dung; and, non-food grade plastics.

4.1.1.3 The dimensions of beehives should provide an environment that meets the desired conditions for the honeybees. Similarly, the beehives should be constructed in such a manner that they are easy to inspect externally for the presence of pests, colony development; a good designed beehive also enhances easy harvesting

4.1.2 Requirements for the construction of improved and modern beehives

4.1.2.1 General requirements

a) Modern beehives should be constructed from long lasting or durable well-seasoned dry timber, which is free from knot holes, and cracks. The timber should have smell that is not offensive to the bees.

b) During construction, well-seasoned and planed timber should be used, and all sections should be glued and securely nailed.

c) All sharp edges or splinters should be removed from the honeybee entrances to the beehive and all cracks and gaps filled with suitable gap filler;

d) Neither should the timber used for the construction of beehive nor the beehive after construction be painted or applied any wood preservative that can have a negative effect on the honey or honeybees. Inside structures can be coated with molten beeswax to preserve the wood; external surfaces can be painted with an oil-based (heavy metal free) paint if needed.

4.1.2.2 Specific requirements for modern beehives include the following:

a) Modern beehives should be properly constructed. The bars or frames should fit properly into the main body of the beehive. When the beehive is fully assembled, the bars or frames should provide for adequate space to enable the honeybees to construct honeycombs;

b) The overall top cover of the beehive should fit properly on the beehive. It should provide for easy removal during inspection and harvesting and should prevent the beehive from adverse; weather conditions like rain and direct sunlight;

c) Top-bars or frames should be provided with a base material in the form of beeswax to act as a bait and therefore promote early colonization. In the case of top bars, this can be a thin coating of wax along the bottom rib, while for frame beehives, the frames fitted with foundation sheets or foundation strips.

4.2 Requirements for establishing an apiary

Criteria for selection of a site for establishing an apiary

The following provisions should apply when selecting a suitable site for an apiary:

a) should. The site should be easily accessible by the beekeeper
b) The site should be hygienic with no potential sources likely to contaminate the forage. should
c) should
d) There should be adequate number of flora (forage source) to serve as a source for nectar and pollen, a good source of shade, in any case the beehive should be away from direct sunlight and have a source of water, good air circulation but free from excessive effect of winds.
e) The site should be away from public places and other human activities in any case a minimum of 100 m
f) Areas subject to flooding should not be used except sufficient safeguards are provided

4.3 installation of beehives

The following should apply.

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a) The beehives should be protected from pests especially termites, black ants and the area should be slashed to keep away fire;

b) beehives should be protected from strong wind, direct sun rays (especially in hot weather areas) and excessive shade;

c) Beehives should be installed on strong poles for example, metallic poles or poles with capability to germinate (live poles). To enable ease of inspection and harvesting, beehives should be sited at the waist level from the ground. Where germinating poles have been used, pruning should be done regularly to reduce possibilities of pest infestation; and

d) The wire used for hanging beehives should be smeared with grease to prevent attack of ants that could destabilize the colonies.

4.4 Inspection of apiaries and beehives

4.4.1 Inspection of apiaries

An apiary should be inspected:

a) To ensure that the surroundings are not overgrown with weeds, which if present should be slashed;
b) For the presence of pests along the supporting poles; on the wires, or on the outside of the beehive itself; if present remedial actions can be sought such as re-coating the surfaces, using rat and reptile guards and oil baths.
c) For the presence of water in the containers provided as the water source, and if depleted, these should be replenished.
d) Morning or evening hours are considered as being suitable for inspection purposes due to relatively low temperatures and at these times of the day, honeybees are calmer and less aggressive.

4.4.2 Inspection of modern beehives

4.4.1.1. For proper inspection of modern beehives, the following steps should be followed.

a) Put on clean protective gears

b) Using a bee smoker, apply moderate amount of smoke at the entrance of the beehive to calm honeybees before opening it

c) With a beehive tool, loosen and remove a beehive cover, couple of top bars or frames from the rear side to create working space

d) Examine a bar at a time by looking at one side first and then the other side and put it back in its original position on the beehive.

e) Hold the bar with combs firmly between thumb and next two fingers, vertically above the beehive to avoid its breakage and dropping the queen outside the beehive.

f) Avoid crushing the honeybees as this triggers the release of pheromones which provokes other honeybees into aggressive action including attack and stinging action.

g) Combs which are constructed together or fastened to the walls of the beehive or across the beehive should be cut off with a knife to allow the honeybees construct the comb afresh. Experienced beekeepers can reposition or re-orientate the combs.

h) Properly dispose any comb material should to prevent wax moth infestation.

4.4.1.2. During inspection the following should be noted:

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a) The strength of the colony and observing the brood (eggs, larvae and pupae);

b) The presence of the queen. In case she is hiding, the newly laid eggs are an indicator of her presence;
c) Prolificacy of the queen, that is, whether she is laying enough eggs or not;
d) the health status of the colony, especially the presence of honeybee pests, honeybee diseases, food store (pollen and honey), adult honeybee population and/or abscondment.
e) The food stores (honey and pollen);
f) Maturity of honey as indicated by capping of the honey cells. At least three quarters of a comb should be capped; and
g) The adequacy of space for the available bees.

5 Harvesting of honey

5.1 General

5.2 Indicators and techniques used for assessing the presence of mature honey in the beehive

Beekeepers should keep beekeeping calendar to provide guidance on the time when harvesting is expected to take place.

The indicators for the presence of ripe honey in a beehive include the smell of honey from the beehive; clustering of honeybees outside the beehive; honeybees are observed not to be carrying pollen; when the local flowering plants drop most of their flowers; honeybees become more aggressive; or through observation at the time of inspection.

5.3 Observation of the colonies

The beekeeper should always observe the colonies for indicators of honeybees being ready to swarm and these include ceasing of brood rearing as characterized by foraging honeybees sending little or no pollen into the beehive. Few honeybees are seen at the entrance during the day; but most of the honeybees continue buzzing and ventilate the beehive at night.

5.4 Preparation for harvesting of honey

5.4.1 Inspection of the apiary

The apiary should be inspected to ensure that the conditions are conducive to harvesting of honey; especially the environment should be hygienic and not polluted with agrochemicals, human or animal waste or garbage in general. Honey shall not be harvested on a rainy day

5.4.2 Equipment for honey harvesting

Equipment required for harvesting of honey should be prepared before harvesting. Bee protective kit shall be available during harvesting of honey.

5.4.3 Techniques for honey harvesting

5.4.3.1. Equipment for honey harvesting

The tools for harvesting include clean airtight honey containers, knives, bee brush or quill feather and hive tool.

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a) Honey containers may be made of earthenware, stainless steel, or airtight buckets, but should always be rustproof.

b) Safety gear should include overall, gloves, bee-veils, gumboots (rain boot) and a torch (if harvesting at night).

c) Smoking instruments or materials including a bee smoker, smoking materials, for example, grass, maize cobbs, oil palm inflorescence, wood shavings, dried pawpaw stems, dried cow dung, papers and source of fire.

5.4.3.2. Preliminary preparations

After inspecting the apiary and the beehives, steps should be taken to ensure that all the required equipment indicated in 7.4.1 is prepared and made available before harvesting can start.

5.4.4 General harvesting techniques

These are applicable to all types of beehives and include the following.

a) Before opening the beehive, a small amount of smoke should be puffed into the beehive using a smoker. Then open the beehive and, remove the combs one by one (giving a very small puff of smoke, if necessary) and examine the combs carefully.

b) Select only combs that are either full or three quarters full of ripe honey. When such a comb is found, brush any honeybees on it into the beehive and use a knife to cut the honey comb away into an airtight bucket. Close the bucket immediately after the honeycomb is put in.

c) Leave about 1 cm of the comb on the top-bar to guide the honeybees to work the next honey crop.

d) Carry on with the harvest until combs containing honey and brood are reached and at this point harvesting should be stopped as mature honey is finished from the beehive.

e) Some combs may not be easy to remove because the honeybees may have attached them to each other. This usually happens when inadequate space was left between the top-bars. In this situation a beehive tool or knife should be used to separate them.

f) After removing the surplus honey, re-site the beehive carefully in the same manner as before.

5.4.5 Precautions during harvesting

The person harvesting the honey should not get into the house immediately after harvesting to prevent other people from being stung by bees. Broken honeycombs shall not be left on the apiary site. Honey harvesting should be done during the day to allow the beekeeper to utilize the natural light and to minimize contamination of the honey. When the harvesting is completed, the beehive should be closed and carried back to its original position

6 Processing of honey

Honey can be processed depending on the types of beehives:

6.1 Processing of honey from modern beehive

6.1.1 Transportation of honey to the processing unit

6.1.1.1 When the loading bay is located inside the building, measures must be taken to prevent contamination of materials, products, and the processing environment from dust, dirt, honeybees and other

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insects, fumes, and other environmental contaminants during the entry and exit of vehicles, and during unloading.

6.1.1.2 Supers must be transported on clean trucks and covered during transport in a manner that minimizes dust, engine fumes and other road-based contamination.

6.1.1.3 Honey supers that are infested, excessively dirty, or contaminated with faecal material (e.g. rodent or bird faeces) must not be accepted for processing.

6.1.2 Storage of full honey supers

6.1.3 Full honey supers must be stored in a suitable storage area or hot room.

6.1.4 supers that are not stored in a room or will not be processed immediately must be protected from moisture and contamination from dust, dirt, honeybees and other insects, fumes and other environmental contaminants.

6.1.5 The storage area and processing room should be bee-proof.

6.1.3 De boxing and uncapping

6.1.6 Deboxing must be done in a manner that will minimize transfer of contamination from boxes to combs. Combs should be visually inspected to ensure that contaminated combs are removed and excluded from processing. Combs that have the following condition should be excluded from processing: infested with wax moth larvae; contain dead brood (bee larvae); or with signs of rodent infestation (e.g. faecal pellets, urine odour).

6.1.4 Extraction

6.1.7 The extractor must be clean and dry before the start of extraction.

6.1.8 Spilt honey should be cleaned and wiped as soon as possible

6.1.9 The extractor must be covered with a lid when not in use (e.g. overnight) to prevent the entry of pests and to prevent steam and water from contaminating honey

6.1.5Straining/filtering

6.1.10 Strainers and filters must be made of food grade materials. Honey should be completely strained to remove solid particles from the honey.

6.1.11 The mesh size of the strainer or filter must be in such a way as to filter any solid particle in the honey progressively

6.1.12 Strainers or filters must be maintained in good condition and must not be a source of contamination.

6.1.6 Processing of the various types of honeys

6.1.13 Processing of comb honey

6.1.13.1 Beekeepers should implement hygienic practices for the handling, storage and transport of honey supers to minimize contamination of the supers which consequently impacts on the microbiological load of honey

6.1.13.2 The cut comb should be processed (cutting and packaging) from selected pieces of sealed, clean and undamaged combs. In case of frame beehives, honey should be produced from frames which do not contain strengthening wire.

6.1.14 Processing of liquid honey

- Some honeys can crystallize on the comb in the beehive or during storage. The crystallized honey should be liquified by warming the honey in a water jacketed container and water bath.

• Honey combs from frame beehives are to be processed using a centrifuge, the combs should be uncapped using an uncapping knife or uncapping fork or a suitable kitchen knife previously dipped in warm water. The frames should then be put in a centrifuge extractor to allow the dripping or separation of honey from the uncapped comb.

6.1.14.1 • Entry of live bees into the storage area, hot room or extraction room must be minimized.

6.1.6.3 Processing of cream honey

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Creamed honey is obtained by controlled crystallization of honey to produce fine, uniform crystals, resulting in a smooth consistency.
To catalyze the process, few crystals of honey can be added into a medium of liquid honey.

6.2 Processing of honey from other beehives

Honey processed from other beehives

This involves separation of liquid honey and wax from completely cut combs harvested from traditional (log, bark, or clay beehives) and transitional (Top-Bar) beehives. In order to maintain its purity and quality, the combs with honey must be handled carefully to obtain the honey as follows:

- Prepare workspace and sort honeycombs to separate from combs with broods or mixed with bee breads or that are partly ripe.
- Crush the combs gently in the clean food grade container to release the honey or uncap honey combs without crushing if to be separated by a spinner.
- Separate liquid honey from the beeswax using gravity straining cloth/ containers or by mechanical pressing or spinning.
- Allow the honey to settle for three to seven days and skim off the floating impurities

7 Storage of processed honey

7.1 After processing, the product shall be kept in airtight containers made of food grade material and in a dark environment, or in containers which prevent direct sunlight.

7.2. The product should be stored in room temperature or below room temperature.
7.3 Honey containers should be placed on pallets to prevent direct contact with the floor.

7.4 Containers shall be made of food grade material, thoroughly cleaned and shall not contain any traces of residue that can be harmful or affect the quality of the honey.

8 Plant construction and layout

Plant construction, layout. Hygiene practices and management of pest and toxic substances should be done as stipulated in EAS 39

9 Packaging and storage

9.1 Packaging material

Honey shall be packaged in a food grade material that protects the integrity and safety of the Product.

10 Labelling

The labelling of finished products should comply with requirements given in EAS 36 and EAS 38

11 Preservation of finished product

11.1 The product should be stored under suitable conditions of time, temperature, humidity, and atmosphere, to prevent significant deterioration.

11.2 Where honey is stored under conditions in which they may become infested by insects and mites, appropriate methods of protection should be used regularly.

12 Traceability and inventory control

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12.1 There must be a system in place for the identification of raw materials and products, and documentation that will allow any finished product to be traced:

12.2 Back to the supplier and the apiaries that the honeybee 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.

12.3 All outgoing products must be clearly identified and accompanied by appropriate documentation

13 Training

Regular training must be provided to ensure that personnel across the value chain are adequately trained on their specific tasks to ensure compliance to this code.

14 Record keeping

14.1 Records should be available and be supplied on demand as evidence to establish food safety. These records should be legible, permanent, and accurate and be signed and dated by the individual(s) responsible.

14.2 They should include procedures, controls, limits, and subsequent follow-up documents. They should be retained for at least one year after the expiration of the durable life date (best before date) or, at least two years after the food has been released to the consumer.

14.3 The records should include where applicable:

i. raw material

ii. quality control record;

iii. grower/supplier agreements;

iv. stock control record;

v. company induction for all staff;

vi. training programme;

vii. daily personnel check list;

viii. sanitation record;

ix. accident and illnesses record;

x. chemicals records (additives, sanitizers);

xi. insects and rodent control record;

xii. foreign matter control record;

xiii. finished product control record, lots records including distribution; and

xiv. consumer complaints register.

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Bibliography

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