

## **HONEY QUALITY REQUIREMENTS OF THE EUROPEAN MARKET**

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As the EU is more and more focusing on the Quality Control of imported food especially of animal origin and the regulations concerning the quality control also for honey have strongly increased. The Honey market is concerned by an increasing number of residual problems. But not only residues but also adulteration, hygiene and genetically modified organisms (GMO) are parts of legislation and of public interest.

The monitoring program according to Directive 96/23/EC requires the strict control of products imported to the EU on different parameters. Since beginning of the year, the EC regulation 2377/90 was repealed by 470/2009 and 32/2010. The legislation in force according to honey will be presented with main focus on the differences to the former ones and the impact to honey.

In Germany most of the demand on honey is supplied by imports, only 20% estimated is produced in Germany. Consumers in Germany and the EU are extremely sensitive to the issue of residues in food. Honey is regarded as natural and pure should be as free from residues as possible. Therefore the number of analyses increased the last years constantly. The main criteria influencing the honey quality and the different aspects of quality control will be discussed. Recently the pyrrolizidine alkaloides (PA), secondary plant metabolites with potential cancerogenic and genotoxic properties, came into the focus of interest. They are formed by more than 600 plant species and as the pollen of these plants are potential PA-sources, they can also be transferred into honey.

Actual data analysed by QSI during the last years are presented and the current situation discussed. Whereas the number of samples with no residue detected increased for most of the well known parameters tested, quality control is always confronted with new parameters and compounds. Only a strict control at each level of production will be an effective mean to improve the quality of the product.