Honey: The other source
Webinar on incentivising honey harvested by forest and tribal communities

Dec 23, 2020
HONEY WE CONSUME IS ADULTERATED

- Almost all honey we consume is adulterated with sugar syrup, advanced lab test find

- Out of 13 brands tested, only 3 passed the test for adulteration

- Out of the 22 samples tested, only 5 passed the test for adulteration

- Advanced lab tests find; 77 per cent of the honey tested was found adulterated/added with sugar syrup
BAD FOR OUR HEALTH; COVID-19 WILL BE MADE WORSE

- Bad for our health; COVID-19 will be made worse
- Honey is sugar but special and full of nature’s goodness
- We are consuming more honey to build immunity against the COVID-19 infection
- But overweight people are more at risk to COVID-19
- So consuming honey that is sugar will make us more vulnerable; more ill

HONEY ADULTERATION  www.downtoearth.org.in
SYRUP IS DESIGNED TO PASS INDIAN STANDARDS

- Laboratory in India does not find adulteration by sugar syrup in big brands
- Most of the smaller brands fail the laboratory tests for Indian standards
- Adulterated with C4 sugar (cane sugar) in most cases or C3 sugar (rice sugar)
- But when all samples are sent to a top laboratory in Germany, the picture changes
- Many passed samples fail on Trace Marker for Rice (TMR), an indicator for rice syrup adulteration
- Almost all samples fail on NMR—advanced test to detect modified sugar syrup

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NEARLY ALL THE TOP BRANDS FAILED IN ADVANCED NMR TESTS

Dabur
Patanjali
Apis-Himalaya
Baidyanath
Zandu
Hitkary
In the case of Dadev and Hi Honey adulteration was more basic—caught in Indian tests.
ONLY 3 BRANDS WERE FOUND TO BE NOT ADULTERATED USING ADVANCED NMR

Saffola
Markfed Sohna
Nature’s nectar
(one of the two samples)
Chinese companies advertise that they have sugar syrup that can bypass Indian tests

We tracked down this all-pass sugar syrup from China and India

We spiked honey with sugar and it passed the test

Then we sent honey of 13 brands for advanced tests to Germany

Same samples that passed in India failed adulteration tests in Germany

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THE BUSINESS OF ADULTERATION IS DEVOUS AND CHANGING

- Honey is the most adulterated food in the world
- The business of adulteration has constantly evolved to beat the laboratory tests
- Honey fraud is a big concern across the world
- In India, the government knows (but is not telling) that something is seriously wrong
- Standards for honey purity have been revised again and again
- Government has mandated NMR tests for honey that will be exported
CHINESE COMPANIES ARE IN THE LEAD

- FSSAI directive on import of golden syrup, invert sugar syrup and rice syrup used for adulteration is a dead end

- Chinese trade portals like Alibaba advertise fructose syrup that can bypass tests

- Same Chinese companies that advertise this fructose syrup that can beat C3 and C4 tests also export to India
HOW WE BROKE HONEYGATE?

- We sent emails to Chinese companies soliciting syrups that could pass tests in India
- These are the same Chinese companies that export fructose syrup to India
- Replies received that syrups are available and can be sent to India
- Chinese companies inform us that even if 50-80 per cent of the honey is adulterated with syrup, it would pass all stipulated tests
- Chinese company export syrup as paint pigment
- Company routes sample through Hong Kong to bypass custom clearance

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To: lisa@foodsell.com
From: [redacted]
Subject: Inquiry about product specifications

Pls check the current quotation as below:
1. F48 C3, C4, SMR, TMR, Oligosaccharides passed HMF less than 20; FOB WUHU USD $ 725.00/MT;
2. F55 C3, C4, SMR, TMR, Oligosaccharides passed HMF less than 20; FOB WUHU USD $ 770.00/MT;
Pls notice that the above quotation is based on 10 containers quantity; if you need CIF price, pls advise which port is nearby you.
Any other needs pls feel free to contact with us.
Best wishes,
Lisa

Vice General Manager

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CHINESE TECHNOLOGY NOW IN INDIA

- We track down a factory that manufactures syrup to adulterate honey in Jaspur, Uttarakhand

- We learn that the code word is “all pass” syrup

- We make contact and procure a sample of this “all pass” syrup

- It will pass all stipulated tests for honey purity says the owner
WE SPIKED HONEY WITH CHINESE AND INDIAN ALL-PASS SYRUPS

- We adulterated samples of pure honey
- Mixed raw honey with Chinese and Indian “all pass” syrups at 25%, 50% and 75%
- Sent samples to laboratory
- Adulterated samples with 25% and 50% sugar syrup passed the test of purity
- We confirm that sugar syrups exist that can bypass the 2020 FSSAI standard for honey

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BEES ARE CRITICAL FOR HEALTH OF FOOD SYSTEM

- Because of adulteration, beekeepers are going out of business
- Farmers are losing livelihoods
- Without beekeepers there will be decline in bees
- Bees provide crucial service as pollinators
- Without bees we lose productivity of food; we lose life

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WE ASK FROM GOVERNMENT, INDUSTRY AND YOU, THE CONSUMER

■ It is time we outwitted the business of adulteration

■ Need to stop import of syrups and honey from China

■ Need to strengthen enforcement in India through public testing so companies are held responsible. Cannot play with our health

■ Every honey company must be required to be able to trace back the origins of the honey—from the beekeeper to the hive

■ We, the consumers must be able to tell adulteration by the taste, the smell and the colour. Our health is in our hands