



19 October 2000

My dear *Minister*,

I was concerned to learn from the enclosed report of the Centre for Science & Environment that its laboratory found high levels of antibiotics in 10 samples of honey it tested recently. Of these, 8 were indigenously produced and 2 were imported ones. Antibiotics are contaminants if found in food for direct human consumption and can lead to a variety of health problems. I understand that while India has prescribed standards for antibiotics and other contaminants in honey it exports but is yet to prescribe any such standard for honey indigenously produced or imported for domestic consumption.

As you well know, honey is commonly used in our households by children and the elderly. In this context, you must agree that we must immediately set legal standards for antibiotics in honey for domestic consumption. In fact, the Food Safety & Standards Authority of India, set up nearly 4 years ago for protecting people from hazardous elements in food items meant for direct human consumption, should have done so by now.

With warm regards,

Yours sincerely,

Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad  
Minister of Health & Family Welfare, India  
Nirman Bhawan  
New Delhi 110 011

Enc: as stated above